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WORLD PICTURES

A DUTCH FISHERMAN, HOLLAND

SCHEEPSHUIS

WORLD PICTURES

BY MORTIMER MENPES ·
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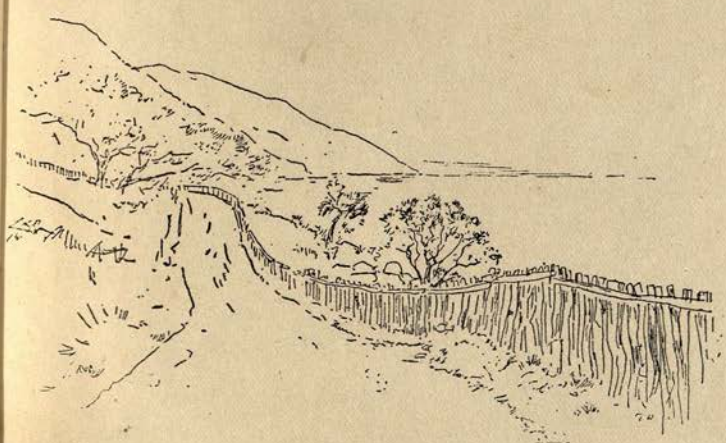
ENGLAND



TRAFALGAR SQUARE, LONDON

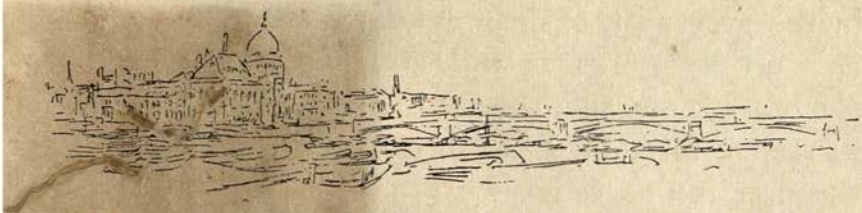
ENGLAND

THERE is perhaps no scene in all England so thoroughly typical of English life, English sports, and English people, as that of Henley Regatta. The river laughs in the sunshine, sloping green lawns touch the water, bulrushes make sweet music in the wind, and the whole brilliant pageantry of London life is floating idly down the stream, men and women of the fashionable world recline on silken cushions, dressed in the smartest of boating flannels and the daintiest of summer costumes. The picture is so typically English that a gaily painted, picturesque gondola, with its attendant white-robed gondoliers, seems rather out of place, although it adds somewhat to the confusion and wealth of colour. Gorgeous house-boats, each struggling to outdo the rest in beauty and originality, line the river side. One is painted salmon colour and smothered with salmon-hued flowers, and even the little boats attached and the gowns of the ladies are arranged to harmonise with the scheme of colour. Later on in

the season the same salmon-coloured party will be there still, not quite so gay, perhaps, but clinging desperately to the river, for one does not pay rates and taxes or ground rent in a Thames house-boat. Almost every day during Regatta week the stream is packed from bank to bank with boats of all descriptions,

— canoes, punts, row-boats, dinghies, — each carrying its charming cargo of lovely laughing women shaded by flower-like silk parasols, and propelled by heated perspiring men, for even the mildest tempered of individuals might lose his temper in negotiating crowded locks. All this appeals to one at the first glance because of its swing and sparkle.

I love the gay river life and the magnificent scenery, the grand grey ruins, the poplars, the mossy banks, the flowers and the fields, — all that goes to make up the Thames of Henley, Windsor, Oxford, Richmond,



and Teddington. But what of the Thames of Chelsea, Battersea, and Westminster, where the green and amber river is changed to a river of steel grey, ghost-like and mist-shrouded, where barges, steamers, warehouses, gas-cylinders, railway bridges, and factory chimneys replace flower-decked house-boats and brilliant midsummer pageants? What would a foreigner think of this London Thames in comparison with the glistening Seine or mystic Nile, or even one of our own countrymen accustomed to the green-banked Medway? He would turn his back on it promptly as a dirty, gloomy, fog-bound place unworthy of consideration. And so would we, no doubt, had not the great master Whistler taught us to love this grey river of ours, to discover untold joys in its black barges, Dutch boats, its tangle of rigging, masts, funnels, and cordage, and, above all

in the grey mist, enshrouding both the river and the city on its banks as with a filmy curtain of silver gauze. It is this haze, dreamy and poetic, that in reality forms half the beauty of the Thames, and through it one can catch Turneresque effects. For instance, you will see a phantom bridge in the far distance with all the lower part swept away in dense mist, and just a broad band of purple showing as though the bridge were suspended in mid-air. It was Whistler, also, who first discovered that there could be beauty in a warehouse; now, when I am told my house resembles a warehouse, I am exceedingly flattered.

The Thames at night is of the darkest inky blue; a thousand black shapes and ghastly piles loom formidably in the distance, and the dark water is all a-glitter with innumerable sparkling lights. Nowhere in England could you find better material for pictures than in Chelsea, more es-

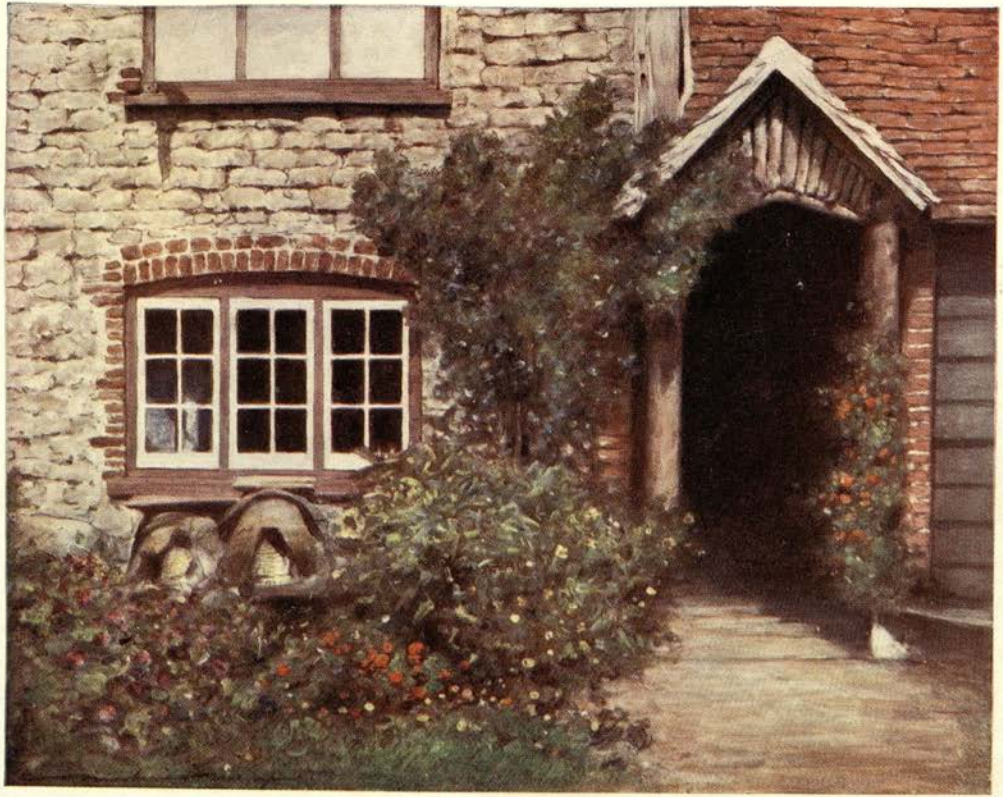
WESTMINSTER, ENGLAND

pecially Chelsea as it appeared four or five years ago; but it was then practically owned by James McNeil Whistler. There were his little shops, his rag shops, his green-grocer shops, and his sweat shops; in fact, so nearly was it all his, that after a

time he sternly forbade other painters to work there at all. I remember an artist telling me that he was once in the middle of making a little sketch down a side street in Chelsea, fondly believing that he had securely hidden himself, when suddenly the master appeared as though from out of the earth, pounced upon the miserable man, and demanded how he dared to paint in his Chelsea. The artist hastily packed up his paraphernalia and slunk off, thoroughly ashamed of

himself, feeling that he had really been acting as a mean poacher on the preserves of another.

There are few places more closely linked with the lives of great men than Chelsea. Thomas Carlyle, Steele, Addison, and even the great painter Turner, all lived in Chelsea. Dante Rossetti, one of the greatest pioneers of modern times, whom Burne-Jones and the Pre-Raphaelites look up to as to a master, lived all his life in Chelsea. At the time when Cremorne, that fashionable meeting-place for artists, was in existence, he and Whistler and Swinburne used to spend their evenings there, enjoying from the grounds the magnificent night effects on the Thames. It was just about this period that Whistler was painting his Thames masterpieces, and among them a picture of the fireworks seen from Cremorne, which Ruskin roundly slated, declaring it to be "a pot of paint

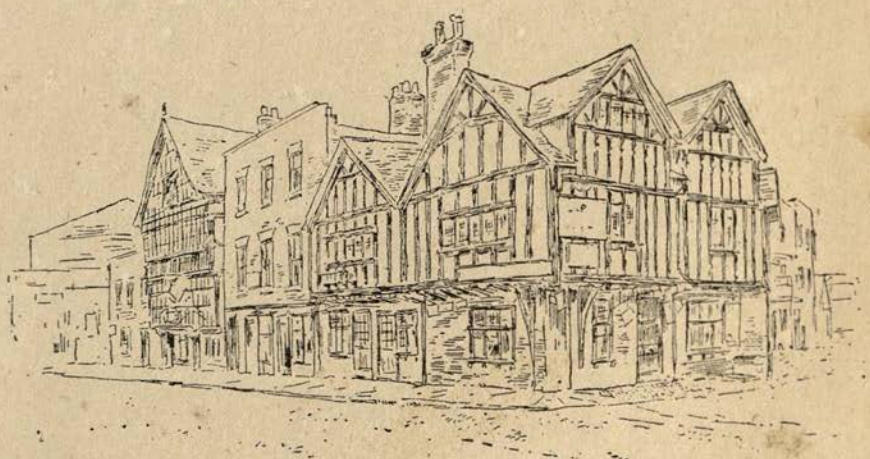


A SURREY PORCH, ENGLAND.

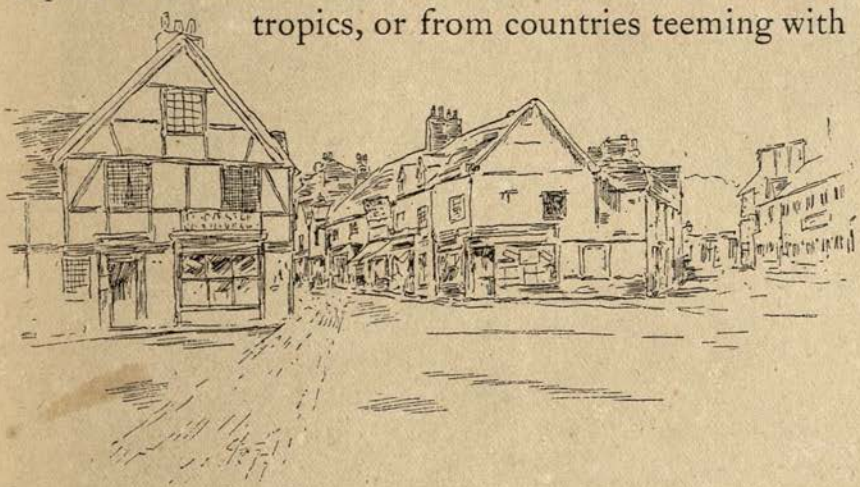
flung in the eyes of the British public." One night Rossetti, who had a perfect mania for animals and stocked his garden with beasts of all kinds, when walking home with Whistler, saw a calf, which he immediately bought and led back to his house, Whistler gingerly following. The next day Whistler called on Rossetti and during the morning went out into the garden to make a sketch. As lunch time came round and Whistler did not return, Rossetti went out himself to search for him. He found him up a tree with the calf at the base, daring him to descend, while Whistler feebly gesticulated with his cane.

What is it that makes the mystic charm, the irresistible fascination of London? Dull, solid, fog-bound as it is, with long unlovely streets, why is one so attached

to this smoky city? Why is it that one's thoughts centre round London always, even when away in sunny Capri? One thinks always of what one will do when back again in London, of what people are doing at that moment in London; one's mind almost unconsciously harks back and hankers after London. Is it because it is the centre of the universe, or is it, again, because of its glorious historic associations, because it is



the largest city in the world, or because of its ancient stones? One's affection springs partially from every one of these reasons, but chiefly because of the intense interest of the great human drama in London, and also because of its really great beauty. One invariably feels a real joy in returning to London, whether from Japan, from Australia, from the wild woods, from the tropics, or from countries teeming with



sun and colour. Yet the sensation, though delightful, is nearly always different. There is the arriving at Newhaven on a summer morning when the white cliffs rise glistening from the sea, then the landing, the getting into the train, and the hurrying through the lovely English country with the downs on either side, seeing the people going to their work, and the old grey churches nestling amongst the green trees. I don't think you can get a more typical glimpse of England than you can in this way. The whole run from Sussex up to London is an example of the beauty of the English land-

scape, which has so often been sneered at by those who go abroad in search of what they consider to be greater beauties.

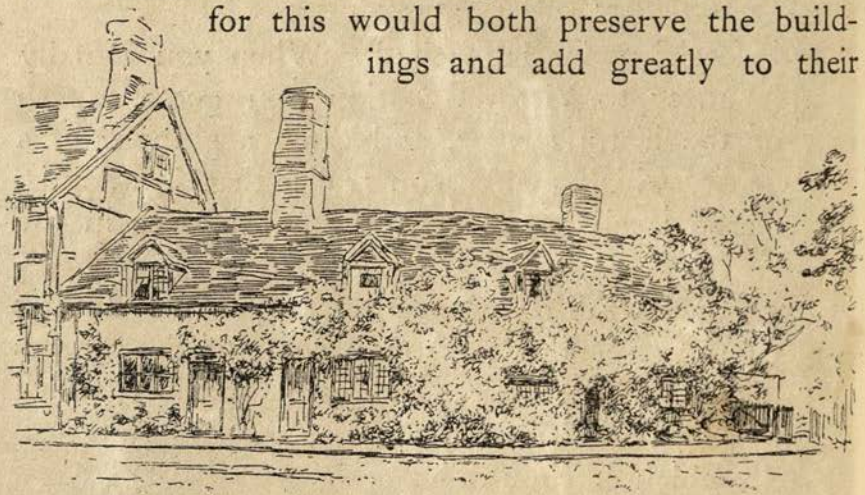
The drawing near to London is an experience of itself. There is no grandeur in the approach, there very rarely is in the approach to any great city, but as the

train flashes by what Arthur Morrison calls "the low mean streets," their fluttering garments and dirty back yards, you are proud and surprised at the vastness of the city, which seems to extend for ever. You read your paper and try to forget the time, but on looking up again there are the same suburban houses, the same long vista of tiled roofs. You go over a bridge and feel that at last you have reached the terminus. But no, you must cross the Thames half a dozen times

more before London is reached. When you actually do draw near to Victoria Station you get a superb view of the historic river, and catch a glimpse of a brilliant city which makes you realise that London is, as the artists call it, the most beautiful place in the world.

You will be full of admiration as you are driving through the streets and through some of the squares past splendid Hyde Park, and down Piccadilly, which if you really regard it in the sense in which it should be regarded, you will consider one of the most lovely streets in the world, with its fine irregular buildings on one side, and the Green Park on the other. The foreigner I am afraid would be at once struck with the extreme ugliness of our wall-posters, especially in comparison with

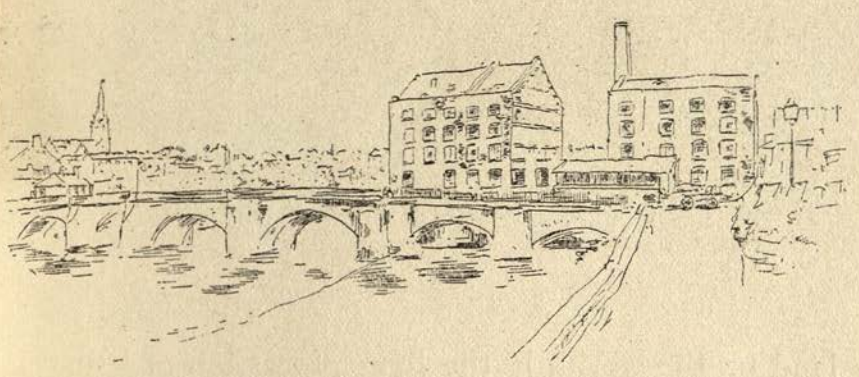
those of Paris. They are better than they were, I am thankful to say, but much more might be done towards beautifying London in this direction. Also London would be far finer if it were cleaner; all those fine old buildings that have their exquisite architecture hidden beneath a thick layer of dirt and grime should be brought to light. What a pity the whole town cannot be distempered over in some way, for this would both preserve the buildings and add greatly to their



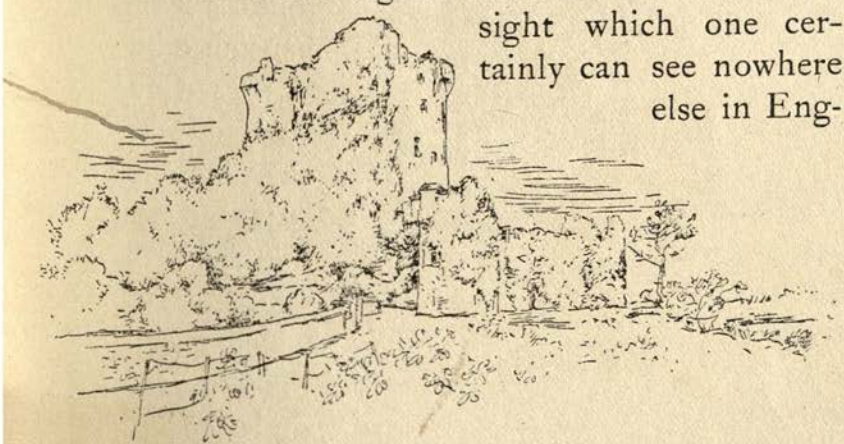
beauty. London by rights should be placed in the hands of the poet and of the artist. Imagine rose-red, brilliant white, and palest green houses, seen through a silver-grey mist. The city would undoubtedly be the joy of the whole earth.

Nothing could possibly be more beautiful than London at night when the Criterion and many other fine buildings are lit up with myriads of lights. Then consider that magnificent sweep into Regent Street;

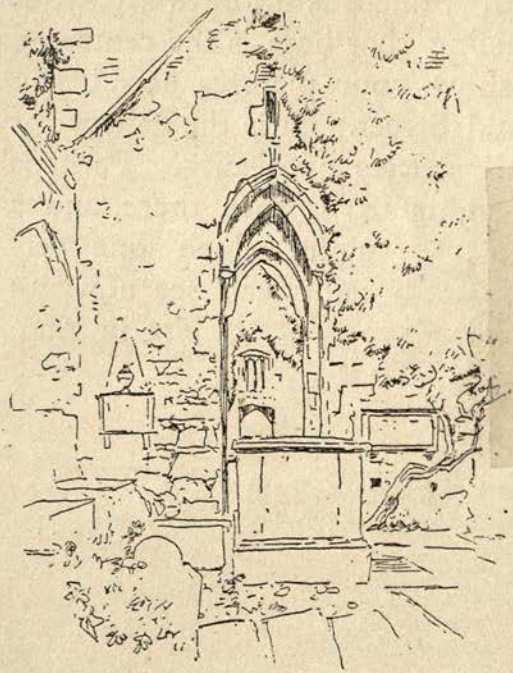
A COTTAGE IN SURREY



it is fine enough for any picture. The Strand is intensely interesting from the historic standpoint, though not of course from the picturesque. Again, there is Bond Street, literally the centre of the world, the principal street in England. There is no outward show, but one cannot help feeling that here is the centre of all interest. If you show your pictures at all you must show them in Bond Street. It is the gallery for all fine arts and for all articles of beauty. Perhaps one of the wonderful sights to be seen there, and a sight which one certainly can see nowhere else in Eng-



land or the world, is the long procession of beautiful women in hansom cabs, who drive up and down Bond Street at all times of the day during the season. I remember once walking through this street with a very eminent French painter. We watched the people pass and repass, and I remember his remarking that the most beautiful women he had ever seen were here. It was not in drawing-rooms that he had found them, but in hansom cabs.



Just fancy what England with its ancient buildings must be to an American; think how he must value the traditions which hang round the old grey cathedrals and splendid

time-worn palaces which stud our country in every direction! Take, for instance, Gloucester, and its cathedral, and the beautiful old Deanery. I was staying there a summer ago with the Dean. We were sitting in his study and he said to me: "Do you know that this room is nearly eight hundred years old? It was built almost immediately after the Norman Conquest, and in this very room more than one of the Parliaments of England has been held; that was in the days when Parliament followed the King wherever he went. In this room Anne Boleyn spent the first years of her wedded life, and it is said that her spirit haunts these passages to this day."

There is another Deanery around which the most splendid memories hang, the Deanery of Ely. I was there but a short time ago, and almost exactly the same associations are grouped round that stately and beautiful building as are grouped round the Deanery of Gloucester. Edward the Third and his wife

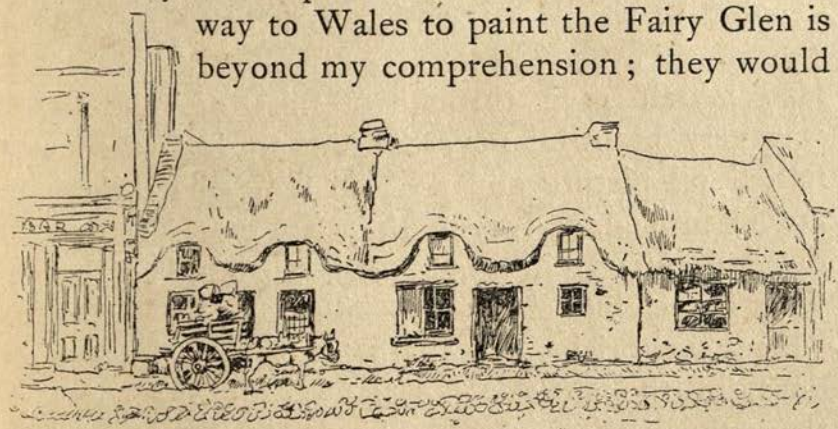
Philippa used to take their meals every day in the room in which the Dean and his family now breakfast. The bedroom in which I slept was five hundred years old, and is said to be the room built for himself by Crawdon, the Abbot of the great Ely monastery.

Do you know Freshwater in the Isle of Wight, where the poet Tennyson used to live, and of which he has written so charmingly in that invitation of his to Frederic Dennison Morris — "Come, Morris, come, come to the Isle of Wight," and he goes on to speak of his careless ordered garden and the wave that breaks in foam upon the beach? I scarcely know a more lovely bit of English scenery. Then there is Dorking, where George Meredith lives, the grey landscape, the Surrey Hills, and the corn-fields so typical of England. Here you get brilliant colour because of the lack of sun; in fact, in Surrey the colours are almost more brilliant than in the East, for the sun is not so bleaching and the haze heightens the tints. Shakespeare's house at Stratford-on-Avon is

of course one of the most delightful spots in England, both from its charm and its associations.

The scenery of Ireland is somewhat bare and desolate, stretches of vivid green with dark, almost black, browns, dotted all over with little white cottages. Before one of these half a dozen babies roll contentedly in the mud, and a donkey cart, piled up with bright green cabbages, is standing outside. The houses for the most part suggest bathing machines with their queer pointed roofs. The peasants of Ireland are not universally beautiful as one is led to imagine, but now and again one does come across a fine specimen with the blue eyes and the jet black hair and clear Irish complexion that is really quite unmistakable.

Wales is the happy hunting-ground of English artists. They all swarm to Bettws-y-Coed, where David Cox did so much of his work, and all, as far as I could see, paint the self-same scene in the Fairy Glen. Why these poor dears should come all the way to Wales to paint the Fairy Glen is beyond my comprehension; they would



have done far better to stay at home and paint Chelsea or Surrey. But they must get in their mountains and their waterfalls. Personally, waterfalls do not appeal to me in the least, and the Fairy Glen impressed me chiefly because of its remarkable array of sketching umbrellas. It was like a camp of soldiers.

Take the finest bit of Switzerland and the finest bit of Norway, dip them in water, and you have Scotland. I have never seen Scot-

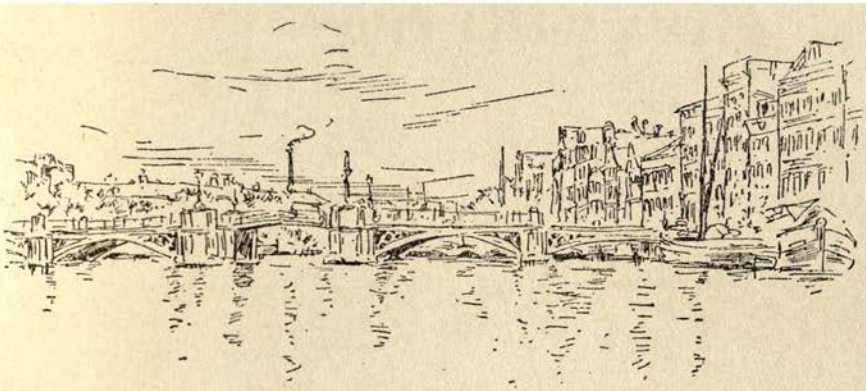
land myself save through a mist of rain, but it was very beautiful nevertheless. It is like taking a flatted oil picture and soaking it in oil; the colours are intensified, and even the slaty greys and greens develop into vivid tones, rich and full of colour. That is the chief charm of Scotland — one sees everywhere such rich, deep, stirring colour. On rainy days, in the mosses and heather, in the stems of trees, the roofs of houses, and wherever there is a

WELSH WOMAN, ENGLAND.

chance of a splash of colour, you get it to the full. It is not the colour of the Orient — white houses with blue shadows, red turbans, and yellow slippers — but the rich deep tones that one associates with Rembrandt, trunks of trees and beeches the colour of burnt sienna, vandyke browns and bitumen if possible, the grass a vivid emerald, with reds in the scenes as deep as the deepest carmine. No country in the world is to be compared with Scotland for rich colouring. One can dispense with Norway and Sweden, and even Switzerland, if one has Scotland.

HOLLAND

ROTTERDAM



HOLLAND

Most people go to Holland purely to study pictures, to Haarlem for Franz Hals, to Amsterdam for Rembrandt, and so on and so on, and no doubt a lifetime could be spent in the galleries, studying that masterful school of old Dutch painters, without nearly exhausting all Holland's glorious store. But in their admiration for the Dutch landscape school, travellers are apt to miss the real sources of inspiration, which are before their eyes wherever they may go in Holland, and which are indescribably attractive alike to the artist and to the writer.

Holland is undoubtedly the country for skies. It may be because of the water that abounds everywhere, or because of the flatness of the country; but certain it is that one gets, as the Dutchmen have so faithfully represented in their pictures, a huge expanse of sky, generally of a clear blue with glorious and most fantastic masses of rolling pink and white toned clouds of beautiful form, against which a narrow strip of silver-grey

landscape, coloured with small red-roofed houses and innumerable windmills, is outlined, and every feature of this scene one sees clearly and distinctly as though it were a model in miniature. It is extraordinary how this flat scenery grows upon one after even a short stay in Holland, and I can quite understand the remark which the Dutch Queen, on returning from Switzerland, made to an artist who had the honour of painting her portrait: "Mountains, mountains, mountains, I am so weary of them, and oh, how

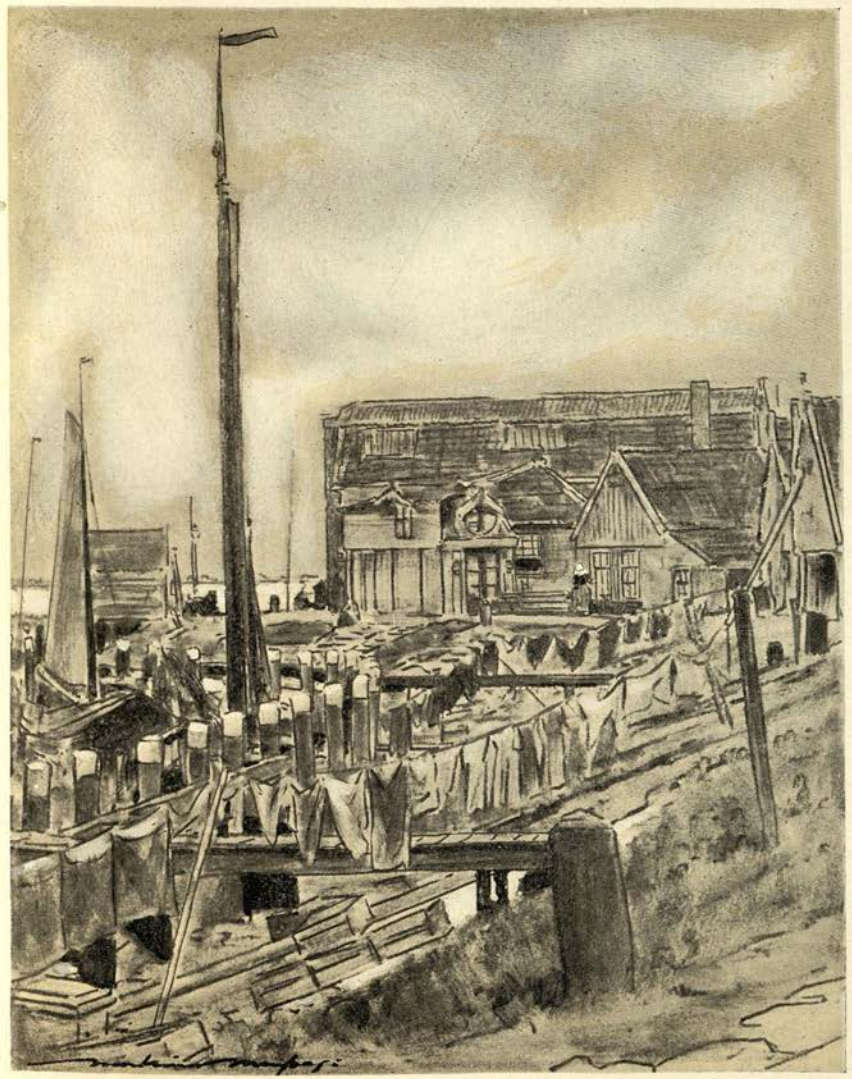
AT VOLENDAM, HOLLAND

glad I am to be back again in my own dear flat countryland."

Edam and Volendam are perhaps the most delightful little towns in all Holland, and yet the majority of people are not aware of their existence and have probably never even heard of their names. Edam for colour is absolutely unsurpassed by any place I have ever seen, and for the colourist as for the etcher it is a veritable paradise. Nothing could possibly be more beautiful than its delightful old houses with their multicoloured brick work, sometimes so mossy and stained by age that it resembles the bloom on a peach; and almost as attractive are the quaint tottering houses

abutting on the narrow waterways, covered with flowers and green with ferns and lichen. To Volendam one journeys from Edam in a little wooden covered-in boat, drawn along the bank of the canal by means of a rope attached to the shoulders of a sturdy Dutchman, who plods cheerfully all the way there and all the way back for a very trifling sum. Volendam boasts of one long street, from which dozens of small alleys spring. These are reached by flights of stone steps, down which one catches glimpses of fine old gabled houses, making a perfect jumble of quaint colour and form with, at the back, either a tangle of shipping — quaint old hulls with brown sails and flapping pennons — or else green-watered canals.

But Volendam interested me chiefly because of the crowds of little children swarming in the streets; girls dressed in big white lace caps with flaps, wearing blue blouses and skirts, and mufflers of all colours, and corals round their dainty little necks; while the boys were more fascinating still, perfect small copies of their fathers, dressed in the same clothes and with almost the same lines in their tiny faces. They wear baggy trousers of all shades of rusty browns, blacks, and blues, tight-fitting maroon jackets with immense silver buttons,



TYPE OF DUTCH RESIDENCE

and red shirts varying from new ruby tones to faded old rose, violets, and blues; deep black velvet caps rise above their round pink and white chubby little faces, and huge wooden sabots, miles too big for them, are on their little feet.

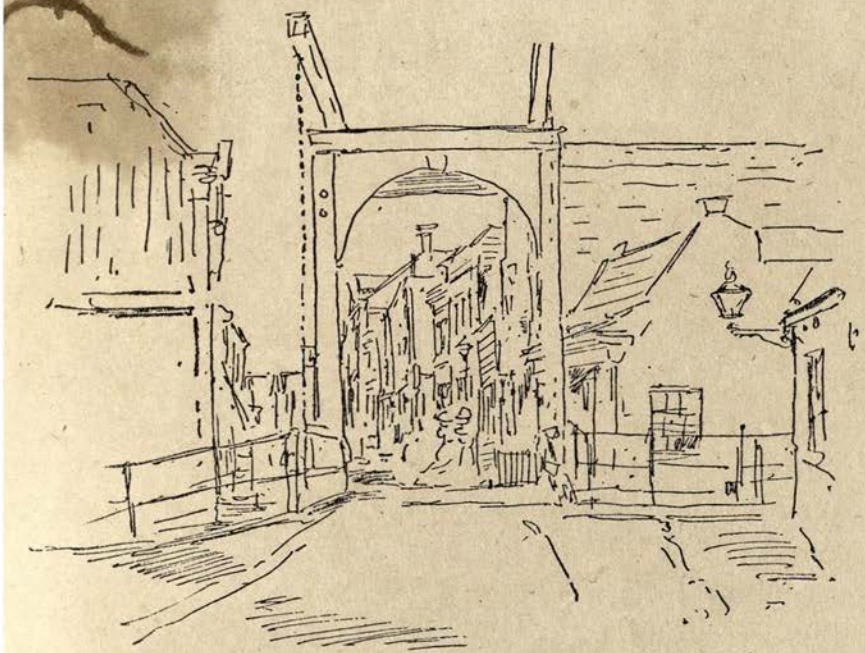
It was at about the time of the commencement of the war in the Transvaal that I visited Holland, and from the rumours we had heard of the intense hatred of the Dutch for Englishmen I quite expected to be badly treated. As it happened, it was entirely the reverse. I never met with more charming and delightful people in my life, and wherever I went I was treated with the greatest courtesy and kindness. Only once did we suffer any trouble or any

inconvenience whatever, and that was in Volendam with a little Dutch boy, who followed us all over the village, shouting, "De English berry bad, de English berry bad." He looked so sweet in his old-fashioned costume and with baby face, as he walked backwards, repeating the one English phrase he knew, that I could n't help loving him in spite of his bad opinion of us; and when after a time he stumbled and fell backwards, over a log of wood, I rushed forward with genuine sorrow and commiseration. As I picked him up, and set him on his feet once more, he looked up in my face, laughed and said, "De English berry good," and then ran shyly away. This was the

EDAM, HOLLAND

most serious trouble we experienced during all our long stay in Holland.

The cleanliness of some of the Dutch villages strikes one with pleasure and admiration, and one sometimes sees women on their hands and knees outside their



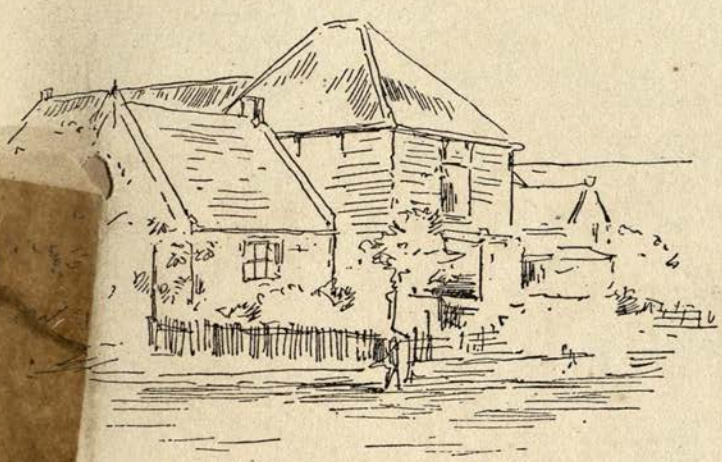
houses scrubbing the very cobble stones, so particular are they. Beautiful spotless interiors one sees all over Holland, kitchens that Peter de Hooche might have sat down and painted just as they stood, fine old rooms with polished oak and mahogany furniture, blue china, brass-bound buckets, kettles, and candlesticks, absolutely golden in colour. One does not truly appreciate the beauties of brass until one

visits Holland. Through the open doors of such rooms one catches a glimpse of old world gardens filled with sweet-scented flowers, and the interior, [illegible] with mellow golden light, [illegible] by comparison with the brightness out of doors. Such scenes bring back to one the pictures of De Hooche, Terburg, and Gerard Dow.

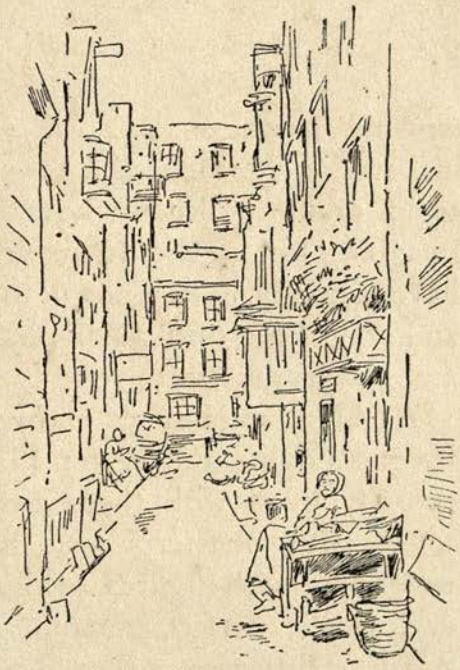
Take, for instance, Terburg: what marvellous painting of flesh is here, every little feature exquisitely and simply drawn; while the colour of a certain vermilion dress is as fine as anything in this world could possibly be. There is no attempt at what is called broken colour and all those modern tricks to overcome technical difficulties which only end in producing a face that

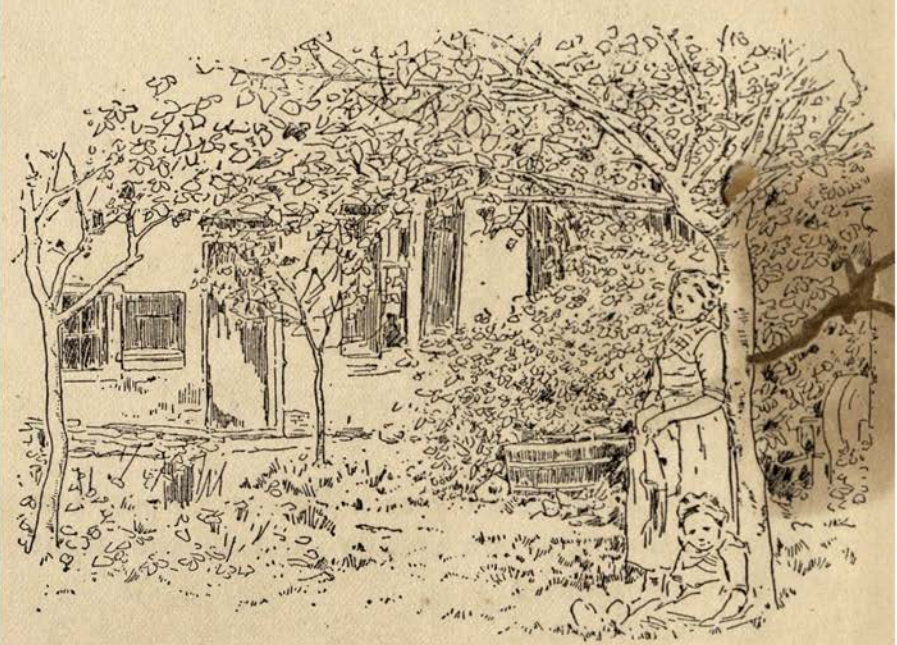
A PROVINCIAL INTERIOR

Holland



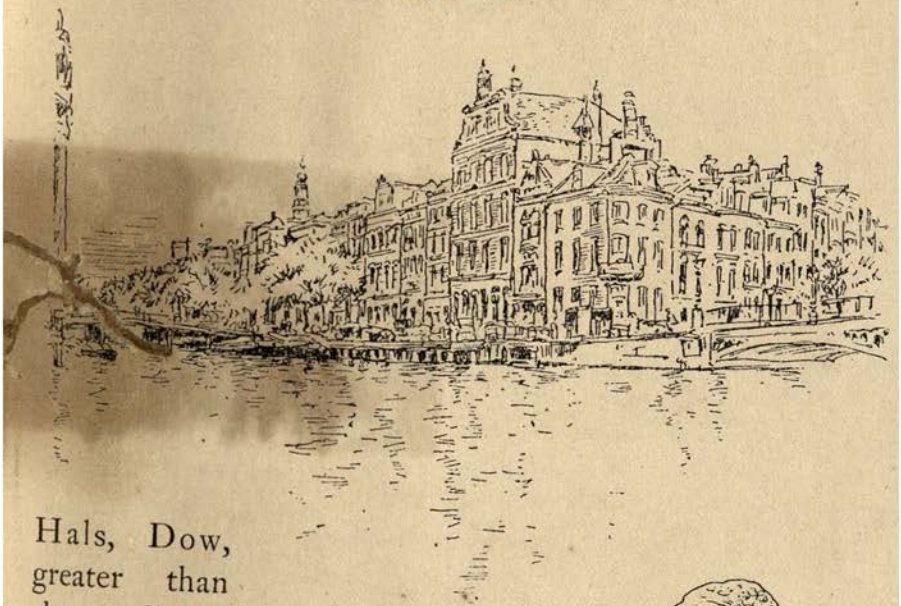
resembles nothing so closely as a Persian carpet, but fresh, clear paint, put on solidly and in the right place. Pictures painted in the exquisite method of this Dutch school must involve a powerful knowledge of the materials used for the work. It is quite obvious that the artists must have had their colours especially ground and prepared, and that the fine, enamelled surface quality must have been the outcome of a tremendous amount of care and labour. One reads that it was not at all





unusual in those days for a man when he had left his studio hermetically to seal the room (entering again goodness knows how, by the chimney I should imagine), lest he should disturb the dust; and painters have actually been known to go out to sea in a boat and stay there until their pictures should be hardened and impervious to dust.

At Haarlem I spent many weeks in the picture galleries studying the Franz Hals; in fact, for a time I actually lived with these pictures. Imagine a room filled with masterpieces, huge, sparkling pictures swarming with figures of burgomasters and archers, each face a perfect portrait. Such work teaches one much. But greater than Terburg, De Hooche, Franz

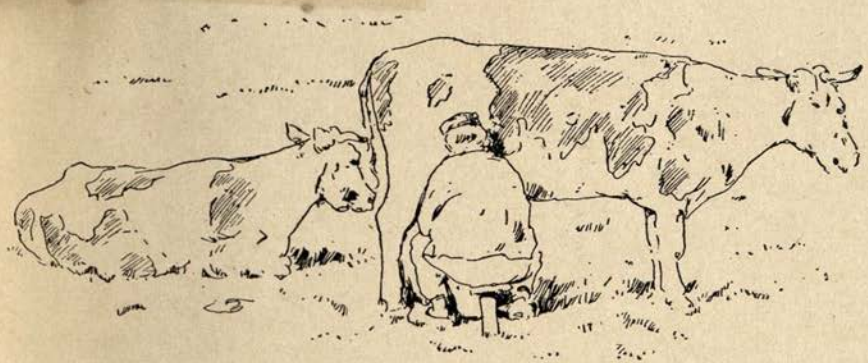


Hals, Dow, greater than them all, and towering above them all, looms the majestic figure of Rembrandt, the master. Holland is practically Rembrandt; he possesses all the qualities of the lesser men combined with his own magical genius. All other pictures, I was going to say, but I will moderate my opinion and say almost all other pictures in the world, fade before Rembrandt's masterpiece — "The Night Watch." What elaboration, what breadth, what glorious technique is here! Above all, what a golden

light these men are living in! One cannot tell how it is done, whether it is painted on gold or lit up in some way from the back, but the people are alive, the tones are like fire, and as one turns from it to the other pictures in the room, even the finest

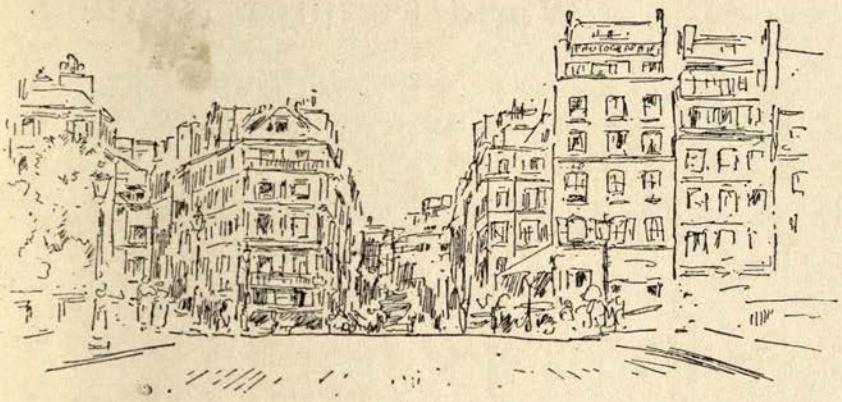
of them cannot but appear slaty, dull, and monotonous. It is considered a smart and modern thing to belittle Rembrandt, to place Velasquez upon a pedestal and Rembrandt far beneath him, but people who affect this pose have only to go to Holland, to Amsterdam, and to study Rembrandt amongst his own surroundings, and I doubt not they

will soon change their tone and admit that Rembrandt, if even by that one picture of "The Night Watch," has amply earned his right to be placed side by side, if not higher than Velasquez. These pictures taught me the value of Rembrandt as an etcher, and on returning from Holland many a long and pleasant day I have spent with the kind help of Professor Sidney Colvin enjoying the superb collection of rare proofs in the possession of the British Museum.



FRANCE

THE SEINE AT PARIS



FRANCE

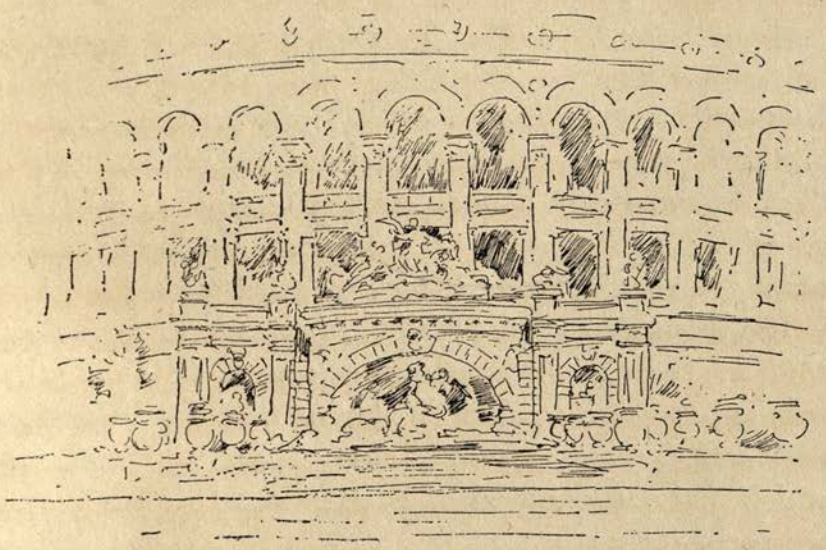
One of the first things, I think, that one notices when arriving in Paris are the posters. The walls and shops are decorated with works of art, for the posters are carefully thought out from the decorative standpoint, and each one is a picture in itself. One finds this perhaps more in Paris than anywhere else. The numerous kiosks, with their blaze of gaily coloured papers, are another distinctive feature. In France, as in America, even the poorest rag of a half-penny journal has its one or two illustrations in colour, — sometimes not so badly reproduced either. These kiosks are invariably the centre of interest, and at all times of the day little knots of blue-bloused *ouvriers*, hotel *garçons*, and boulevard loungers are to be seen gazing open-mouthed at brightly coloured cartoons of Kitchener being defeated by the Boers, or of Mr. Chamberlain with an abnormally large eye-glass and button hole, being worsted in some ridiculous way or another. These cartoons are pasted to the advertisement boards,

or sold by a little white-capped old lady within. Certainly the Parisian book-stalls are an improvement upon the black and grey aspect of the paper shops one sees everywhere else in the world.

Where do the American and English women hail from, I should like to know, who parade the streets of Paris? Do they reserve a particularly hideous type of garment that they may appear more atrocious than ever by the side of the neat, smart, Parisian ladies, and be put to shame by the spotless, tastefully dressed *bonnes* and shop-women who, young or old, pretty or plain, manage to present an appearance far more elegant, sad to relate, than any of our own country-women to be seen in the streets of the French capital? One finds in England the most beautiful women in the world, and in America the best dressed, yet in Paris they must needs appear clothed in what they choose to

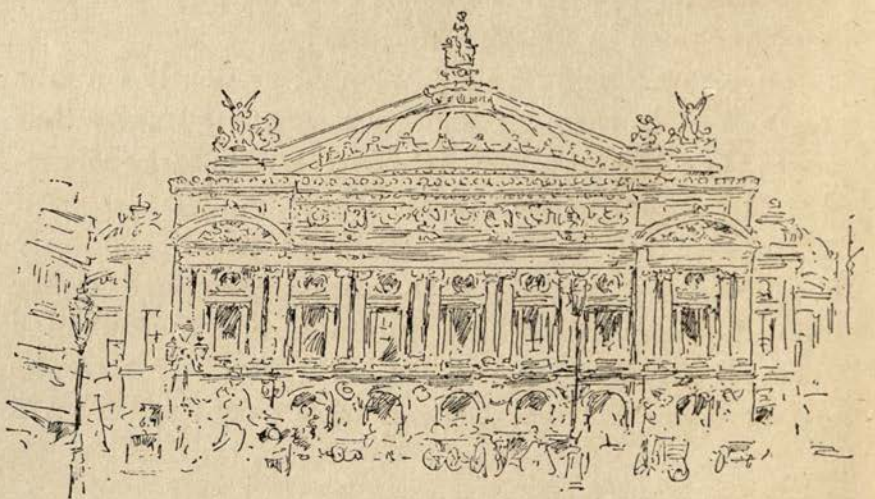
term "good useful garments;" and nothing in this world can be more terrible than the good, useful, flat-heeled shoe, the useful skirt, and — above all — the useful hat. But there they go, swinging along the streets absolutely oblivious of their cruelly unattractive appearance. Small wonder that the Parisians have so poor an opinion of our taste in matters of dress!

I once saw a middle-aged woman, evidently on her way from Italy through Paris, wearing a summer hat (it was then late autumn), trimmed with a large assortment of poppies, cornflowers, wheat, and bedraggled chiffon, — a hat for the existence of which the only possible excuse could be that its owner had either tumbled down a well head foremost or been out in a series of violent storms. "*C'est ridicule de porter un chapeau comme ça*" was the remark I overheard from a



crossing-sweeper near by, and I could not but agree with him.

By way of illustrating the extent to which such women will carry this abominable negligence I cannot refrain from giving the following remarkable instance.



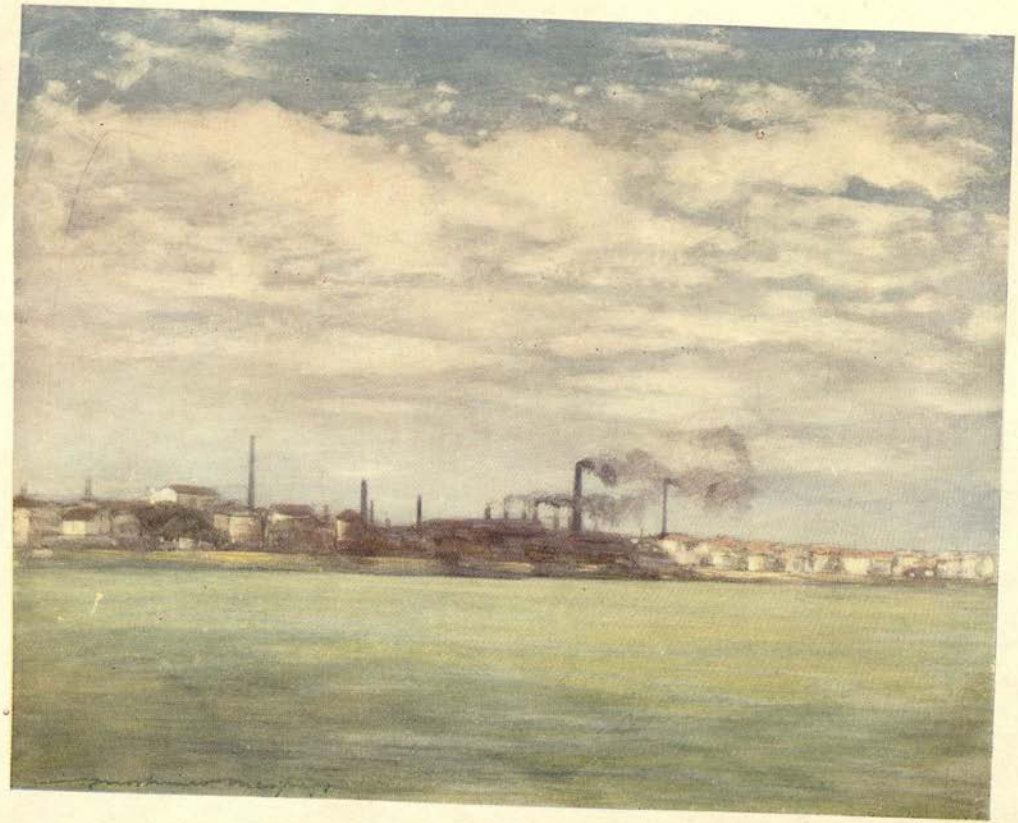
I was sitting enjoying an opera in Paris one evening, in the height of the season, when in the middle of the performance a woman dressed in mackintosh and goloshes, and carrying a number of parcels and a canary in a cage, stalked into the theatre and sat down in the front row of the stalls. Now there was not a soul in that opera house but saw and ridiculed the woman, muttering under their breath of the discourtesy of "*ces affreuses Anglaises.*" Such are the spectacles which make the blood of a patriotic English man or woman boil.

There is one matter in which we differ greatly from the French people, and that is in our appreciation of the pleasures of home life and of the family circle. A domestic existence, such as we lead, would seem to them little short of imprisonment. All the Parisian world and his wife live out of doors, at all events so far

as the middle classes are concerned; they surge through the broad white streets and boulevards, and swarm outside the numerous restaurants, sipping their *café noir* and talking over the gossip and pleasures of the day.

At the time that I was in Paris the Russian fleet had arrived, and all the French world, with its usual extravagance, went mad with enthusiasm and exuberance of joy. Men embraced one another in the open street, and literally sobbed as they read the accounts of complimentary Russian speeches to French officials in their morning papers. Fêtes and holidays and public

rejoicings took place nearly every day in the week, when Russian healths were quaffed in extra large draughts of absinthe and cognac. French and Russian flags fluttered from every window and house-top, Russian soups, Russian fish, and Russian valses were *de rigueur*, every ragged gamin whistled the Russian national air, while people even went to the absurd length of wearing gold rings and lockets with gigantic R's gaudily emblazoned upon them. Can enthusiasm go further? Yet what a strong undercurrent of discontent and repressed fury lies beneath this frivolous gay exterior! And of such changeable stuff is the French nature made that this impulsive affection is ready at any moment to leap into passionate hatred, and the claws of the tiger are hidden closely beneath the velvet paw, so that they are prepared to fondle almost at the precise moment that they kill. I remember one fête night sitting in a café at about the period of which I speak. A girl had finished singing, and the men were quietly drinking and playing dominoes, when suddenly, almost before one could look

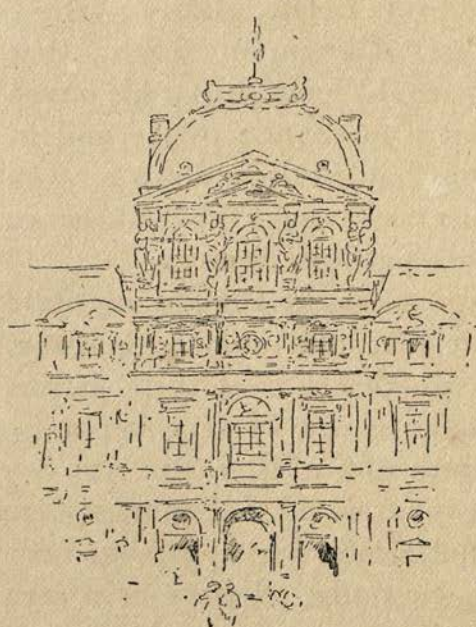


ON THE SEINE, FRANCE.

round, there was an uproar! Some one had discovered that the proprietor of the hotel was not flying a Franco-Russian flag, and therefore he must be a traitor to France. The idea originated probably with one foolish man, but in an instant they had all caught the infection. Before five minutes were over, absolute chaos reigned in the orderly café, and not one bottle, glass, or article of furniture remained intact. Then, no doubt, that wretched hotel proprietor would have strung his house over with Russian flags at a moment's notice, and in any case had probably only hauled them down for the night, yet these people must needs make this disturbance to demonstrate their intense patriotic feelings.

The noble army of Copyists at the Louvre are quite a feature of Parisian art life, and very interesting, almost pathetic, it is to watch them at their patient daily labour. But it is only as one of themselves, by attempting to make a sketch of a picture, that one can be admitted into this little inner world. The artists live apart from others, and understand and appreciate little else but their own particular trade. I have seen men come day after day and week after week to labour away

at the same pictures, and ladies also, who, by the by, almost invariably perch themselves upon ladders, and copy the largest and most ambitious pictures in the gallery. There was one man whom I noticed particularly because he never painted anything but saints in blue dresses, being able for each picture, he proudly informed me, to command the sum of thirty-five francs. It always struck me, though, that on each picture he must spend quite its money's worth in concentrated energy. For such a small sum he could only afford common colours in bladders, such as flake white and yellow ochre; but to glaze his picture over he required rose madder and cobalt, both most expensive colours. To watch the ingenuity with which this poor little fellow would steal pigment from off other men's palettes was one of my daily, almost hourly, amusements. This is how it occurred. From his exalted position on the top of a ladder he would catch sight of an artist of the typical shilling shocker type, obviously an amateur, dressed in a velvet jacket, and fitted with all manner of bran-new traps, and with extrava-



gant blobs of colour, squeezed on to his large bran-new palette. The little man on the ladder would begin to stare at the artist's work with a cold critical eye, which the novice soon began to feel. He would turn sharply round, but our impoverished friend was gazing elaborately at the ceiling. This went on for some time until at last the newcomer asked him flatly if he could see anything wrong with his picture.

"No, not at all," replied the other nonchalantly, proceeding with his work.

"Now look here! I know there's something you don't like about my picture; be a good fellow and tell me what it is."

"Well," said our wily friend, clambering slowly down

from his ladder and standing behind the other, "if you really want to know, I tell you frankly that I don't think that figure is quite, quite in proportion." At this the artist began to gesticulate with his right hand, as all Frenchmen do, holding the left over his shoulder

with the palette on his thumb. Flip! — off went a fat curl of rose madder safely folded in the critic's palm. Then, as the palette went back again, to make the poor wretch still more excited it is suggested that a certain blue, which is obviously greenish, is too purple. This suggestion always proved a great success: the palette was flung back and all the pigment safely scraped off with a careful forefinger. Then the helping friend went back with his magnificent haul to finish his picture, leaving the artist muttering to himself something about

"Ridiculous! ridiculous! anybody can see that that's a greenish blue. Purple indeed!"

Presently you would see him stand up and look curiously about him, examining first his coat-tails and

then his sleeves. After gazing for some time with blank amazement at his swept palette, which looked as though some one had been sitting on it, he would squeeze out more pigment and begin to spoil his work by correcting the badly drawn figure; and, altering the offending blue to verdigris, he would probably end his days in the nearest lunatic asylum.

Parisian life has its charms, but French country life is, in my opinion, still more attractive. I once spent some months at a little country town on the Seine, and the subjects to be procured there for pictures as well

as for studies were simply superb. There were the patient fishers who never seemed to catch so much as a sprat, for all their labours; the river barge life and the wonderful colour effects produced at all times on the river. When the tide is low the sky reflected in the mud flats produces a bluey tone quite indescribable, and when the tide is high on late autumn evenings a

SEUL VÉRITABLE
EXTRAIT
DE VIANDE
LIEBIG

A. KIOSQUE, PARIS

purple haze envelops river and sky, while the golden lights from every barge and the new slim silver moon above the bridge are the only touches of colour, and the deep silence is broken only by the plodding of a

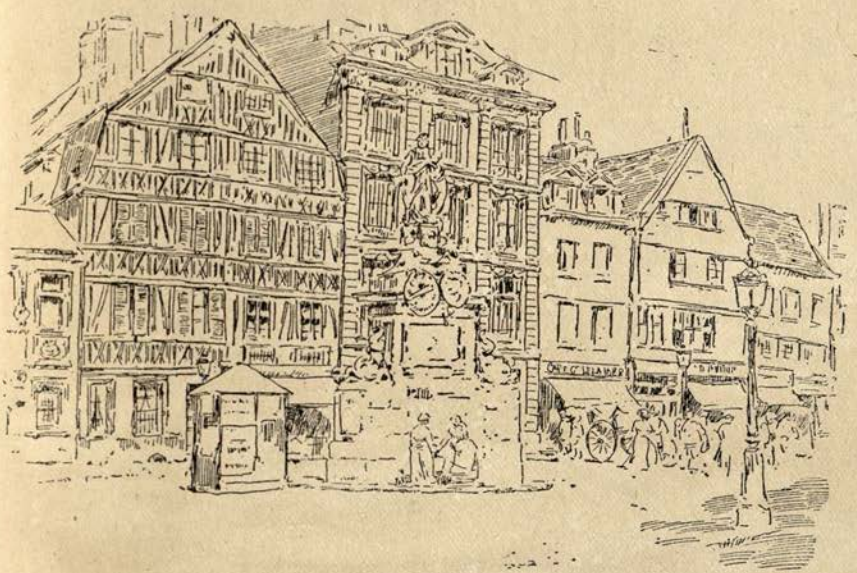
weary old horse dragging a heavy boat along the river bank.

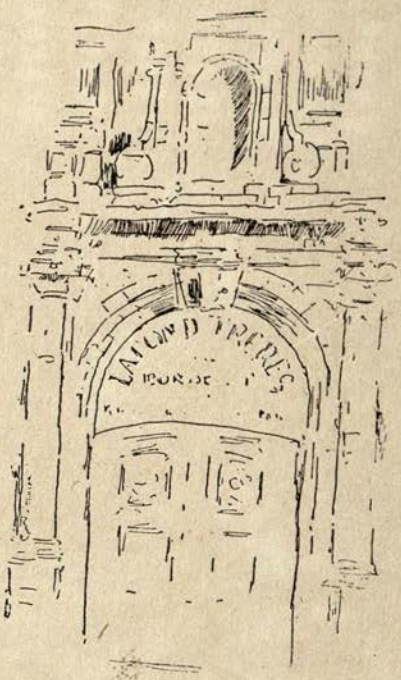
Some of the scenery in France is truly beautiful: the grey landscapes, the slim avenues of carefully trimmed trees, the well-wooded forests with, in the autumn, their magnificent carpets of salmon leaves mingled with silver stems.

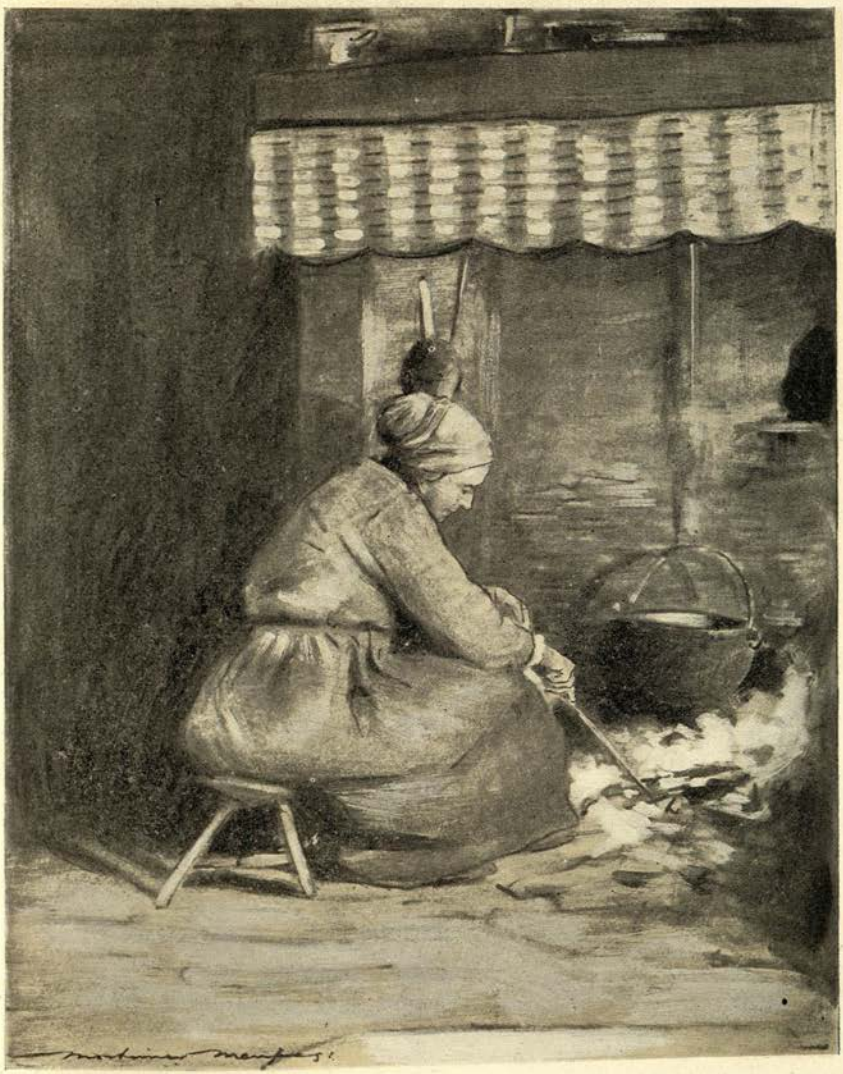
French hotel life in a small town is quite an experience, and it is always the same, wherever one may go.

There is the same indifferent red wine, and the half-dozen unsatisfactory courses for every meal, and invariably the same group of commercial travellers. To watch these gentlemen at their meals, though a repulsive, is sometimes rather an amusing sight, the business they make over it, as though their very life depended on it. The importance they attach to the tucking in of the serviette, and the spreading it over their capacious chests, the yard-long loaves of which they will eat almost the whole during one meal, and the violent way in which they gesticulate, as though in a towering rage with one another, — all these things are so many indications of character well worth studying.

NORMANDY



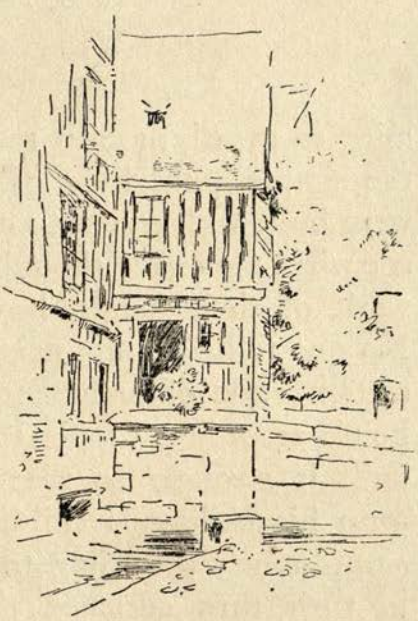

LAUDUNUM TREVERORUM
BURDE



AN OLD FASHIONED HEARTH

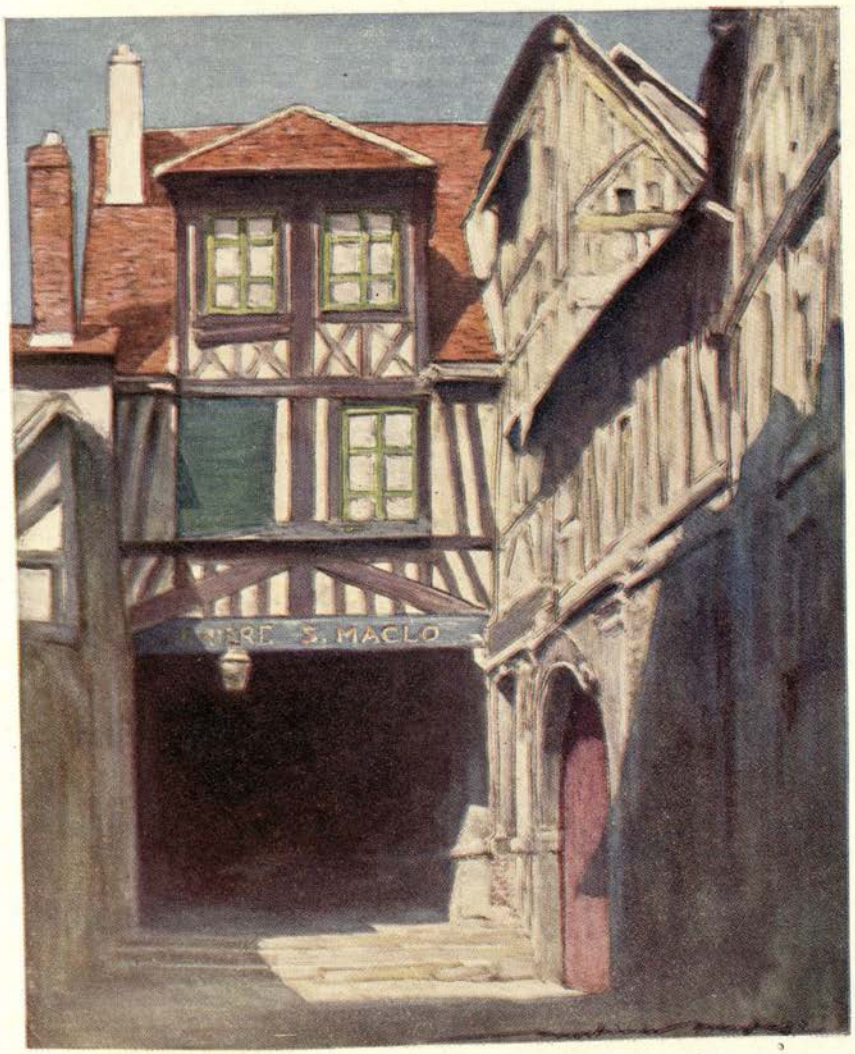
NORMANDY

It is good to get away from London, from the social degradation, the toadying to the rich, the petty meannesses, the crowded "At Homes," and to find oneself in one of the peaceful little villages of Normandy, if only for a few weeks. It is good to live for a time amongst the simple kindly people, who still cling to the traditions of their ancestors, loving to do as they did, taking a pride in their beautiful old houses, and striving to preserve them from decay. That usefulness is the basis of all righteousness and true art one realises to the full in Normandy. These grand old houses, with



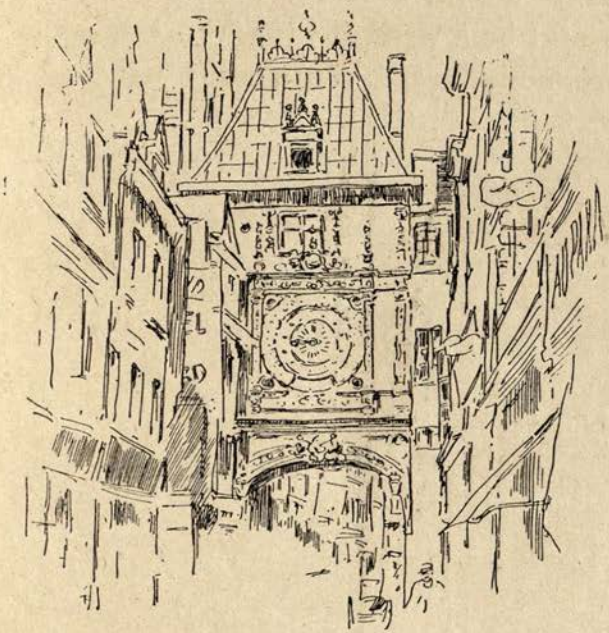
their massive rafters, projecting gables, quaint niches, window seats, and corners, bringing back memories of the mediæval days that we set such store by, this strength and simplicity of design that we ad-

mire so greatly, are in reality merely the outcome of the simple, pure lives of the people. These houses were built with a view to comfort and usefulness, in an age when men gave thought and consideration to every work of their hands, however great or insignificant. No one followed his neighbour then or strove after a certain style of architecture, but each man built his house according to his requirements and his tastes; built it strongly so that it might be handed down unto his children's children in good repair; built it sumptuously according to his means. His offspring in their turn enriched the "family mansion" with


S. MACLO

ROUEN, NORMANDY

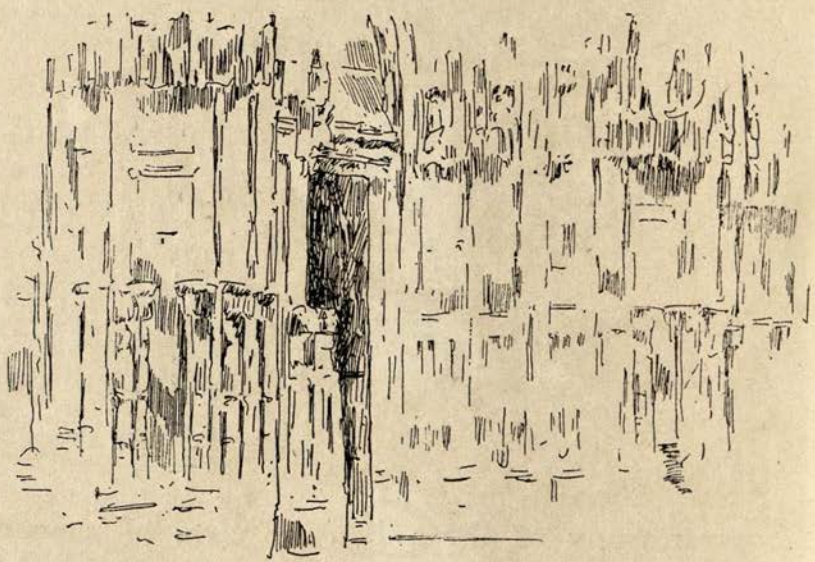
carvings and improved it still further, each faithfully carrying out the ideas of their elders, and guided, as it were, by a kind of artistic intuition.



A great many of these houses have, of course, become uninhabitable. Though black and stained with age, they are still beautiful, as they lean one against the other, tottering on the verge of ruin. The new houses are built very much on the same lines, half timbered, but not so richly carved, and are surrounded by flowering shrubs and creeping vines.

They are a conservative people, these Normans, living much the same lives as did their ancestors hundreds of years ago; in fact, they are almost Oriental in their unchangeableness. One cannot imagine liberty

flourishing in Normandy, nor picture to oneself fans nailed to the fine oak walls and umbrellas glued to the raftered ceilings. It would be, in fact, just as incongruous as to attempt Gothic architecture in London. There would be a want of fitness in living in a mediæval house nowadays. We should have to begin all



over again and live simpler and better lives. Such things should not be forced, but allowed to come about naturally.

Some of our modern inventions are becoming quite beautiful objects because they have been designed purely for the sake of their usefulness and nothing else, every detail in them being designed to serve some purpose. Take, for instance, a hansom cab, that most useful of conveyances. The West has pro-

CATHEDRAL AT LILLEBONNE

duced no greater triumph architecturally. Then again, the much-abused bicycle is developing into quite a thing of beauty, simply because it has been carefully thought out with regard to its usefulness and comfort alone. Its only blot is, perhaps, the maker's name or crest, in which his own decorative instincts have been brought into play, with almost infallibly execrable results.

BRITTANY

VEGETABLE MARKET, BRITTANY.

BRITTANY

No part of France is more useful for artistic studies than Brittany, no town more picturesque than Pont-Aven. There costume, architecture, craft of all sorts, physiognomy, manners, and customs are primitive and unique. There I found myself in the midst of an amazing nest of French and American painters, all the newer lights of the French school. There one was free to work at whatever one liked, yet with unlimited chances of widening, by daily argument, one's knowledge of technical problems. For two or three years I remained on this battlefield of creeds, and conflicts of opinion raged constantly. Every one was frantically devoted to one or other of the dominating principles

of the modern school. There was a regular bevy of schools there. One, called the Stripists, painted in stripes, with vivid colour as nearly prismatic as possible, all the surrounding scenery; then came the Dottists, who painted in a series of dots; there were also the Spottists — a branch of the Dottists, whose difference from the latter was too subtle for my comprehension. Men there were who had a theory that you must ruin your digestion before you could paint a masterpiece. No physically healthy person, they declared, could ever hope to do fine work. And they used literally to try to bring about indigestion.

One man, celebrated for his painting of pure saints with blue dresses, over which Paris would go crazy, never by any chance attempted to paint a saint until he had drunk three glasses of absinthe and bathed his face well in ether. Another poor dear creature decided that he was going to have an exhibition of merry-go-rounds in Paris which should startle all France. He, too, had a theory that the only way to get at the soul of the thing was to paint when quite

BRETON PEASANT

drunk; he maintained that the merry-go-rounds whirled round faster then, and I never doubted him for an instant. One day I went to his studio. I was dazed. I did n't know whether I was standing on my head or on my heels; catherine-wheels were n't in it. It was quite impossible to see Black Bess or any of the pet horses we knew so well, for the pictures were simply one giddy whirl. Then there was the bitumen school, a group of artists who never painted anything but white sunlit houses with bitumen shadows. A year or two afterwards a terrible thing invariably happened. Without any warning whatsoever the pictures would suddenly slide from off their respective canvases onto the floor, the bitumen having melted.

The Primitives, again, afforded me pure joy. Their distinctive mark was a walking stick, carved by a New Zealand Maori, which they always carried about with them, as they said it gave them inspiration. And so powerful was the influence of these sticks that even

the head of a Breton peasant assumed the rugged aspect of these primitive carvings in their paintings. The most enthusiastic disciple of this curious sect was a young man who was continually receiving marvellous inspirations. Once, after having shut himself up for three days, he appeared at length among us, look-

ing haggard and ravenous. Without a word he sat down heavily near a table, called for some absinthe, and giving out one huge groan, sunk his head in his hands and murmured, "Ah me! ah me!" Of course we were all in a fever to know what the mystery was. After some minutes of dead silence he rose majestically from his chair, stretched forth one arm, and with a far-away look in his eyes said, "Friends, last night when you were all asleep a beautiful creature came to me in spirit form and taught me the secret of drawing, and I drew this." Then he brought

A BRETON WOMAN, BRITTANY

out a picture and showed it to us. It was certainly far above his usual style, and the more credulous of us envied his good fortune. Some weeks afterwards, however, it was discovered by a painter with detective instincts that the marvellous vision was in reality no

more nor less than a *chambre au clair*, that is to say, a prism through which objects are reflected on paper, enabling one to trace them with great facility.

The hotel where we all stayed was kept by a woman called Julia. From being a maid servant she had succeeded by reason of her own untiring energies in becoming the proprietress of this huge establishment. Her fame as hostess and manager was bruited all over France. Every one seemed to know of Julia, and year after year artists and their families came back regularly to stay with her. There

was one man, a retired officer, whom no one could manage but Julia. He had come to stay in Pont-Aven, because he could live there for a few francs a day, and drink the rest. He suffered from hallucinations and took great pleasure in chasing timid artists over the country side. He was consequently the terror of the village. He had a house on the quay, and one early winter's morning, when the snow lay thick upon the ground, just because a small vessel came into the river and began blowing a trumpet or making a noise of some kind, he sprang out of bed in a towering rage, rushed in his nightshirt into the cold street, and began sharpening his sword on a rock, shouting to the ship's captain the while to come out and be killed if he dared. The captain very naturally did not dare.

The Breton peasant is full of dirt and dignity. He lives on coarse food, lodges with the pigs, and rarely changes his clothes;

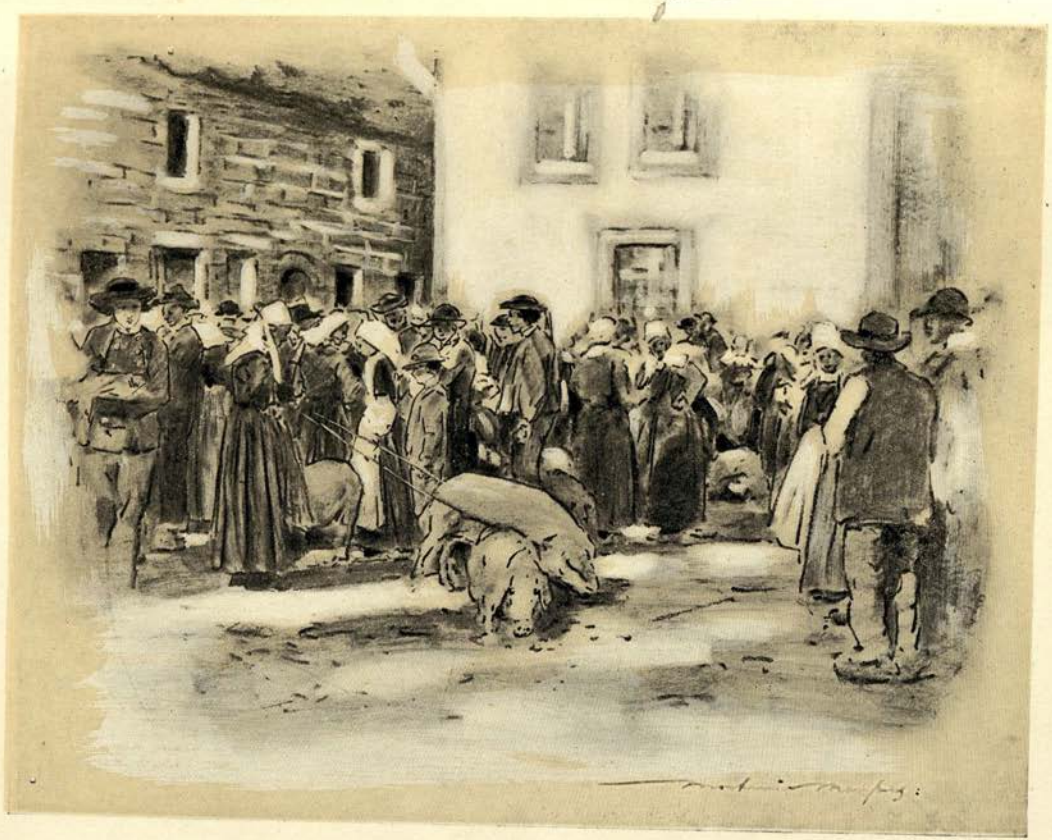
yet nowhere will you meet with such dignity of bearing, charm of manner, and almost nobility of feature, as among the peasantry of Brittany. On entering the poorest cottage you are received with old world courtesy by the man of the house, who comes forward to meet you in his working garments, with dirt thick upon his hands, but with the dignity and stateliness of an emperor, begging that you will honour his humble dwelling with your presence. He sets the best he has in the house before you ; it may be only black bread and cider, but he bids you partake of it with a kingly wave of the hand which transforms the humble fare.

These peasants remind me very much of Sir Henry Irving. Some of the finest types are curiously like him in feature, the same

magnificent profile and well-shaped head. It is quite startling sometimes to come across Sir Henry in black gaiters, broad-brimmed hat, and long hair streaming in the wind, ploughing in the dark brown harvest fields, or else chasing a pig, or dressed in gorgeous holiday attire, perspiring manfully through a village

gavotte. Surely none but a Breton could chase a pig — that most elusive of animals with the most tapering of tails — without losing his self-respect, or count the teeth in a cow's mouth and look dignified at the same time. No one else most certainly could dance up and down in the broiling sunshine for an hour on end, and preserve a composed demeanour.

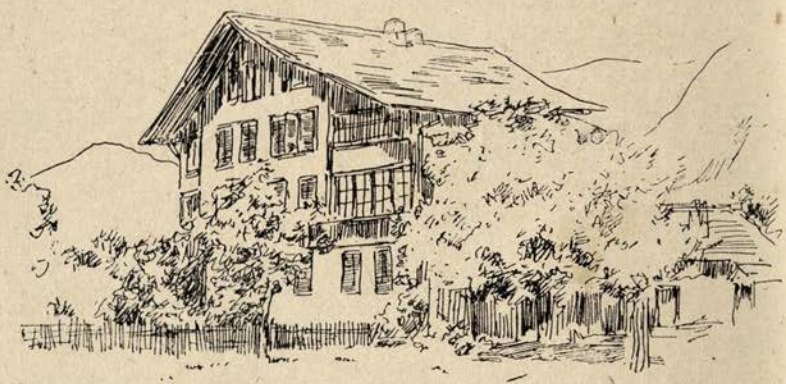
The Breton peasant is a person quite apart from the rest of the world. One feels, whether at a pig-market

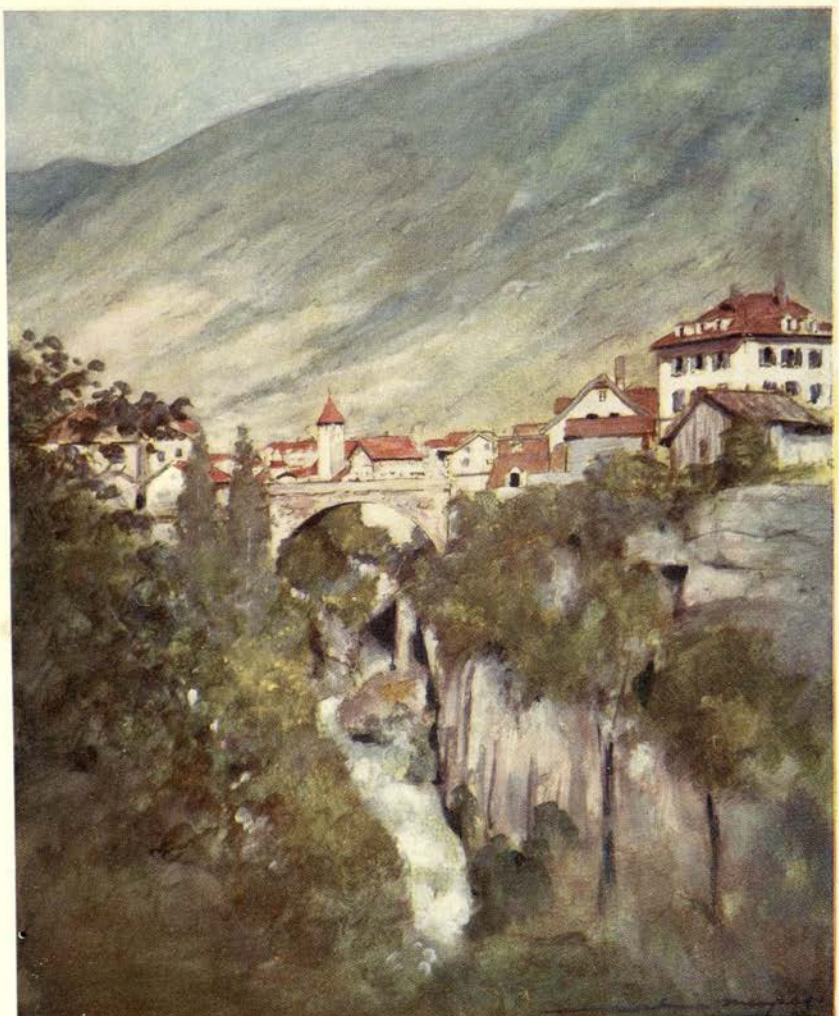


PIG MARKET

or a wayside shrine, that these people are dreamers, living in a romantic past. Unchanged and unpolished by the outside world, they cling to their own beautiful traditions; every stone in their beloved country is invested by them with poetic and heroic associations. Brittany seems as though it must have always been as it is now, even in the days of the Phœnicians, and it seems impossible to imagine the country inhabited by any but mediæval people. In the silver landscapes with their sharp touches of vivid green you see Corot's pictures everywhere.

SWITZERLAND

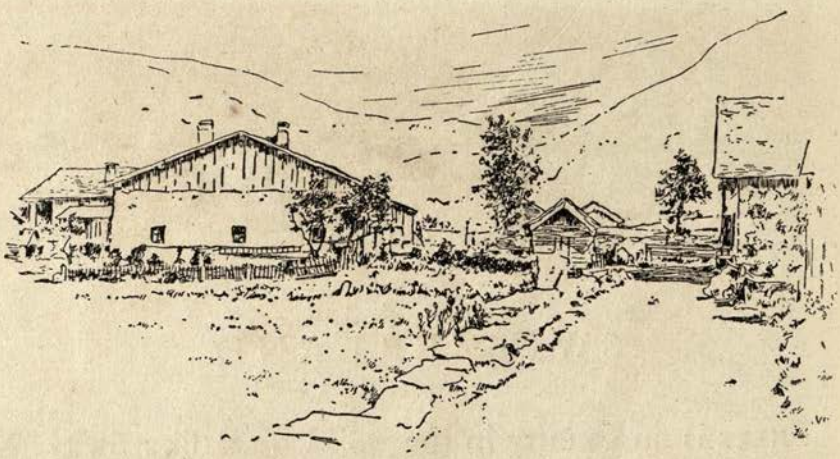




GOESCHENEN, SWITZERLAND

SWITZERLAND

THERE is no country in the world quite like Switzerland, with its glittering fields of snow and its magnificent stretches of green, changing constantly in aspect at all times of the day. Fancy Monte Rosa at daybreak with the yellow-flushed sky deepening into pink, and then changing into blue, until one sees a glistening ridge of mountains far ahead, with the sun blazing down upon them so dazzlingly that one's eyes can scarcely bear the brilliant vision. What I have noticed especially about Switzerland is that one gets such clear limpid colouring; in the extreme distance there are pearly greys and greens and rose tones, but in the foreground the colours are rich, dark greens and dark browns. The timber looks like burnished gold, and sometimes towards sunset the natural wood of the houses

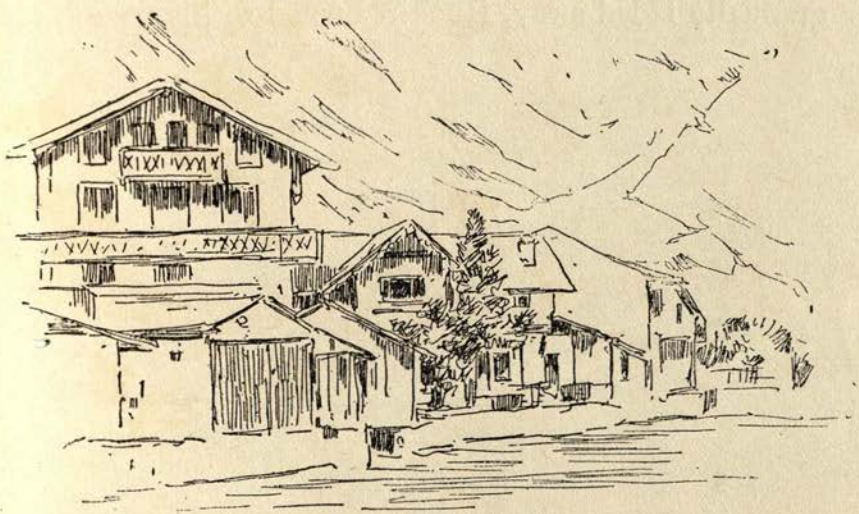


has appeared so brilliant that I have actually gone up close, and peered right into them, to see if they were not made of metal. The colour changes are very violent, from wet to sun, from storm to calm.

I remember once going up to the mountains near Geneva. It was a brilliant sunlit day, with a great

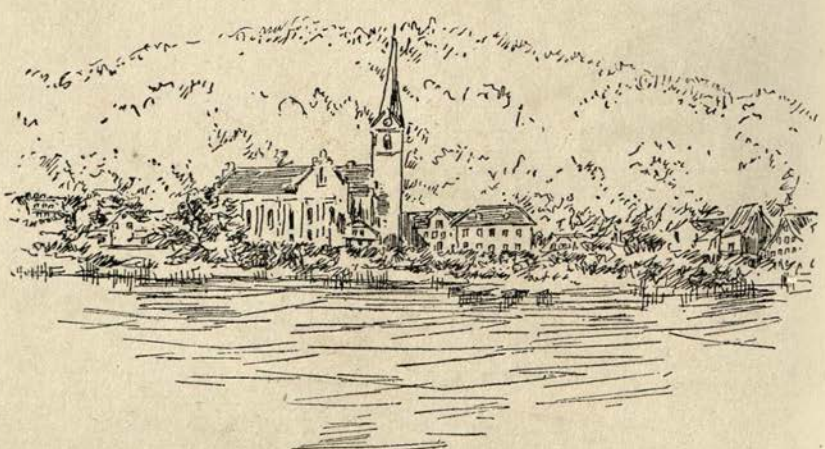
CHALET NEAR LUCERNE

deal of wind and clouds of dust; but in the afternoon suddenly, very suddenly, there blew up a tremendous pile of clouds far over the mountains, followed by a good deal of thunder and lightning, and a deluge of rain which lasted half an hour. Then the storm seemed to be swept to leeward, and the sun burst



out, making every little leaf and twig and blade of grass sparkle in the sunshine, as though laden with jewels, while the birds burst into a perfect frenzy of song. The magnificent greens of the foreground almost caused one to forget the dazzling white mountains beyond. Nature resembled a handful of seaweed, dragged out of the water and thrown dripping on to silver sand.

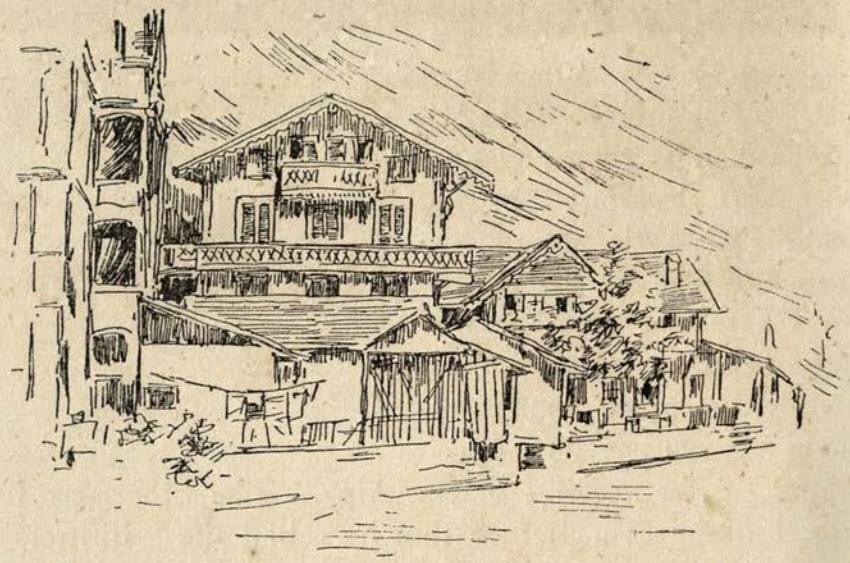
In this very place Mr. Ruskin was walking one evening with a friend, and in turning a corner they came full in view of a range of snow-clad mountains, absolutely crimson in the setting sun. As the colour gradually faded away, Ruskin turned to his friend, and



GOESCHENEN, SWITZERLAND.

said very sadly, " Ah, space is infinite ; why cannot time be made infinite also ? " Ruskin more than any one else has illustrated to us with the magic art of his pen and also of his pencil — I care not whether his art was correct or not — surely he more than any one has taught us something of the making of the Alps. The other day I was looking at a picture that he called the " Buttress of an Alp," and nothing, it seems to me, could give us a finer idea of the mystery and the solemnity of the Swiss mountains than that sketch of his, which, though obviously the work of an amateur, was delightful in its suggestion of sadness.

Unfortunately, most people who go to Switzerland



look upon it only as a modern show place, and in so doing lose a vast amount of pleasure, for they appear to forget altogether that Switzerland is, for its size, with the exception of Palestine, more fraught with splendid historic memories than almost any other part of the world. You cannot pass down the lake of Geneva upon a brilliant summer day without recalling the battles that were fought upon it in the days of the Romans.

And Geneva itself conjures up memories of the most extraordinary interest. It was here that the protestant Calvin burnt his brother protestant Servetus, for the slightest difference in their mutual faith. Jean Jacques

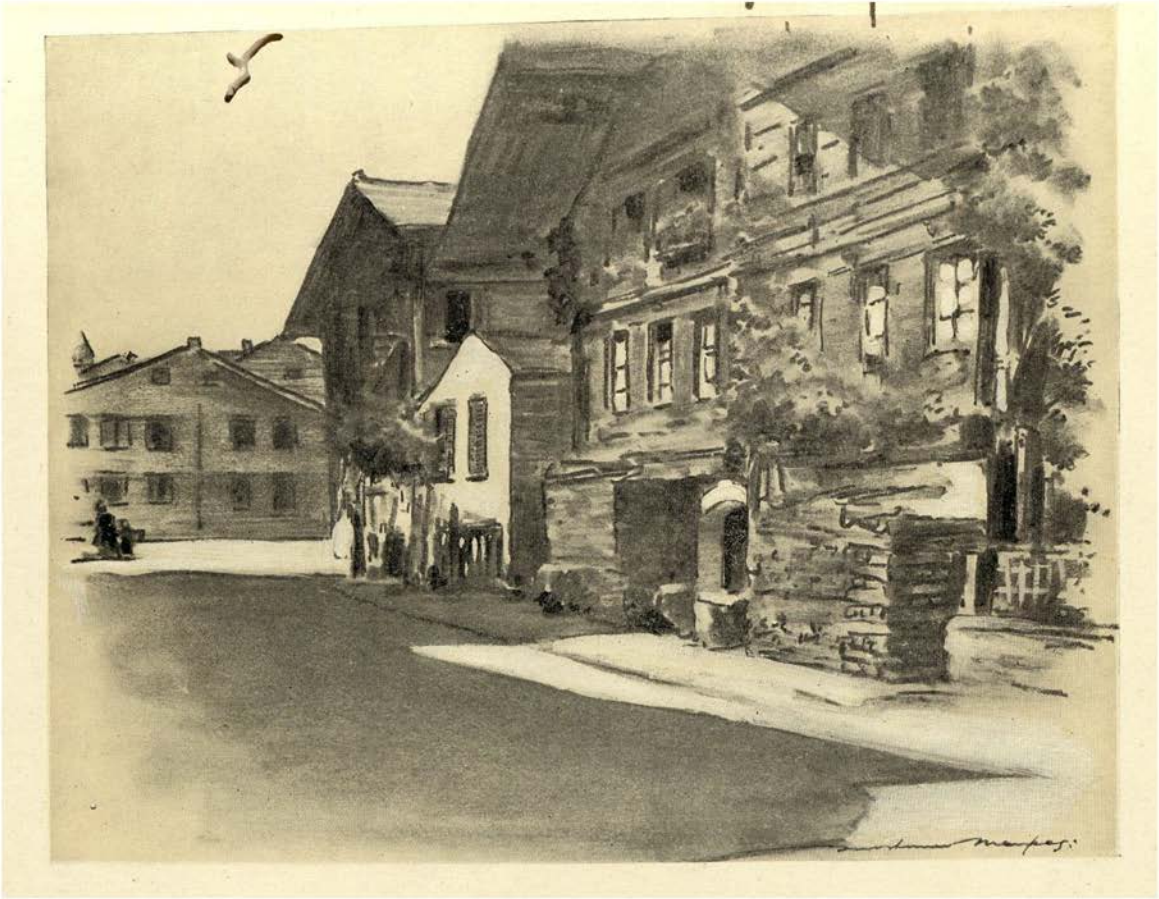
INTERLAKEN, SWITZERLAND.

Switzerland

Rousseau laid the scene of many of his most stormy romances upon the blue lake of Geneva, Voltaire lived and died beside the lake, and in its immediate neighbourhood Gibbon brought his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" to a brilliant conclusion. Madame de Staël's most brilliant moments were passed in this delightful locality, and no one can visit the castle of Charlemagne without recalling with a thrill Byron's splendid lines upon the infatuated Bonnivard.

It was in Switzerland that William Tell played that practical joke that was not wholly unconnected with bows and arrows and an apple upon that evil tyrant Gessler. It was in Switzerland that the brave Arnold fell at the head of his men, dying the most splendid death that a patriot has ever been known to die. Switzerland is indeed not only to be valued for its superb natural beauties, but as the homeland of some of the greatest people the world has ever known.

There is one village in Switzerland where, if you call out in the middle of the day "Waiter," everybody rushes out of every house shouting, "Yes, sir." I also noticed that Switzerland is curiously devoid of cuckoo-clocks and art; this only by the way.



INTERLAKEN

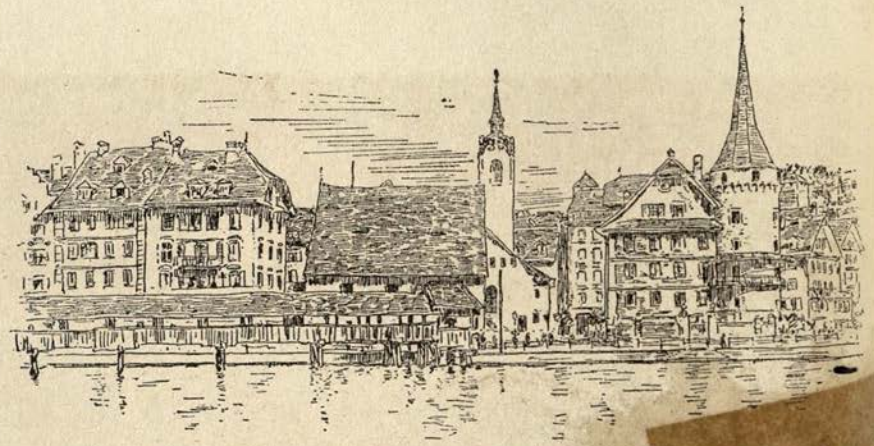
Switzerland

There are few more charming experiences than going up in the train from Interlaken to Grindelwald. You go up and up, every moment nearing the eternal mountains with the eternal snow upon them; you catch the most superb glimpses of the crimson sunset sky reflected upon the brilliant white of the mountains, and then as the darkness comes on, your train runs

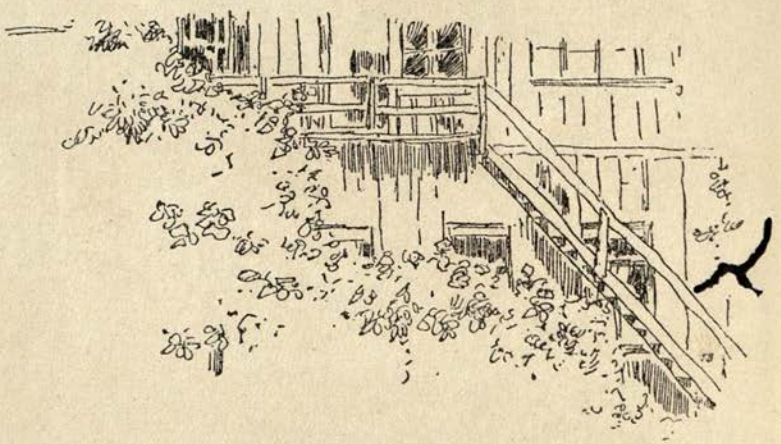
into Grindelwald. Then there is the glorious sensation of waking the next morning: the morning before you were in hot, dusty Geneva; this morning you are in the finest, the most exquisite climate in the world.

A MOUNTAIN TORRENT

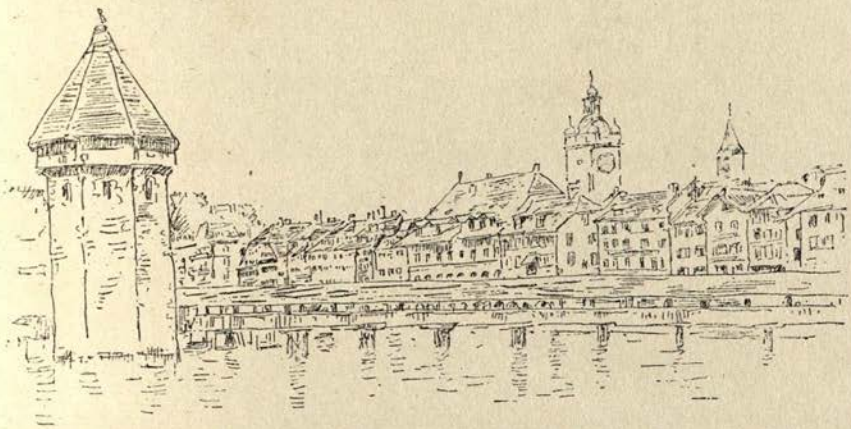
All is absolute freshness; you can almost smell the snow and the ice, and from your bedroom window you see glittering afar off one of those beautiful but deadly glaciers for which Switzerland is so celebrated. You can go for a walk to the blue ice grotto, always with



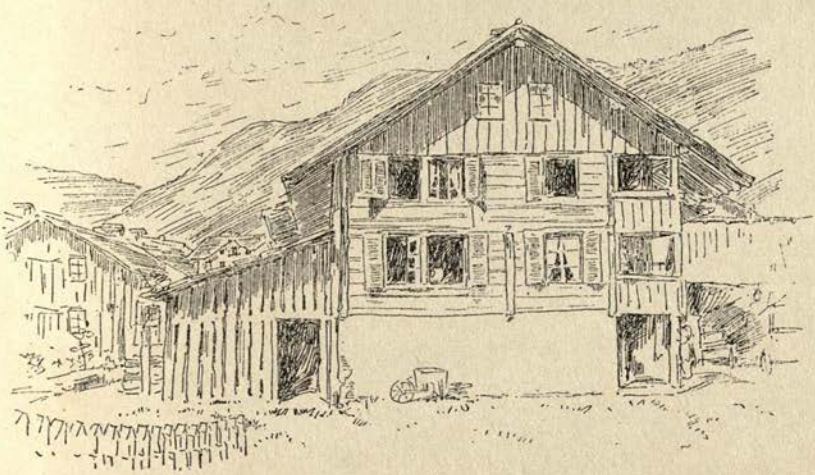
those vast silent snow-capped mountains towering above you, and in doing so you pass one of those curious mountain horns with which the natives call up the echoes from the mountains. Nothing more exquisite can be imagined than those echoes tinkling down the mountain side from point to point, repeating themselves a hundred times over. When you reach the grotto itself, you find that you are hedged in, as it were, by the most perfect prismatic colours of

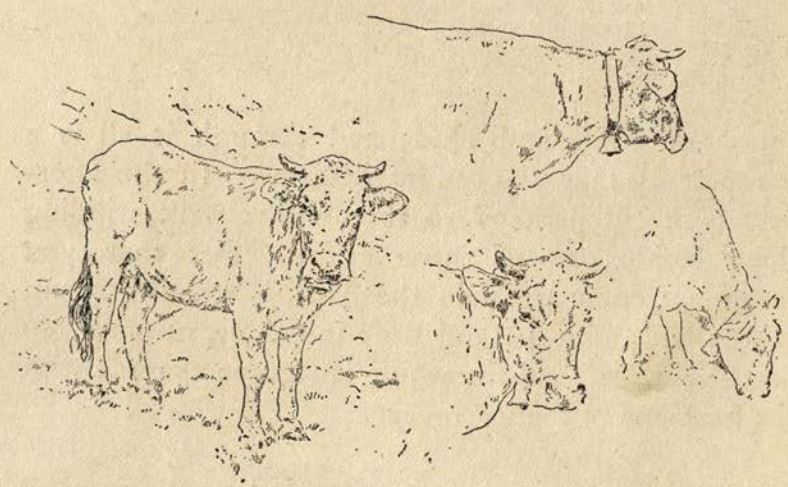


LAKE OF LUCERNE



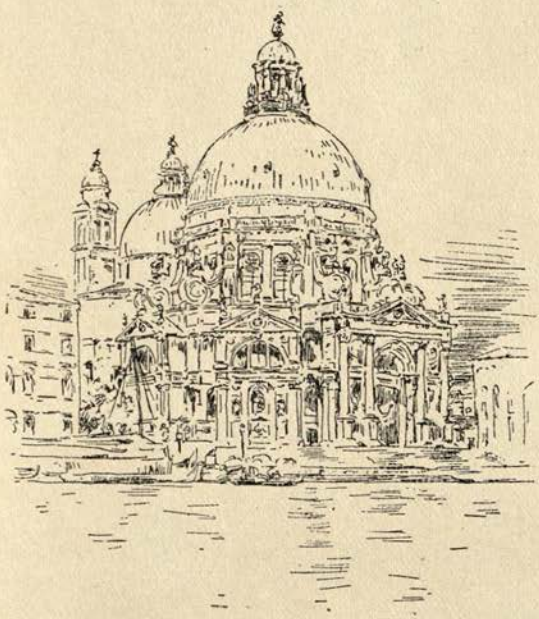
green and white and blue; and through it all is a transparency that you cannot describe. In the afternoon you will perhaps go for another walk, winding along beside one of those awful defiles that you sometimes come upon in the Alps, — a snow stream, cold as ice, and white and grey in colour, running beneath your feet, and the whole landscape charged with the freshness of the icy breeze.





NEIGHBORHOOD OF CHAMOUNIX

ITALY



SIOVANNI
C. BERNARDI

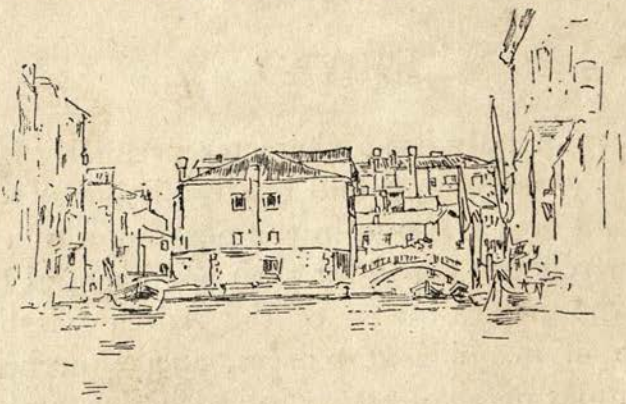
A DOORWAY, VENICE, ITALY

ITALY

EVERY city in Italy has a character peculiarly its own. Each is in a way unique and totally dissimilar from its fellows, and each is proud in the possession of a dozen or more structures famed for their architectural beauty. Venice, the stately queen of the Adriatic, is literally made up of magnificent palaces, and churches, and fine examples of architecture, of such rich and varied wealth and such diversity of styles that one is almost overpowered. Gothic palaces stand side by side with venerable specimens of the Renaissance, Venetian, and Italian periods, architectural glories sufficient to turn the heads of all artists and lovers of the picturesque. Time has laid heavy hands upon Venice, yet it seems to have augmented rather than diminished her charm. This fairy water-city was born beautiful, and beautiful she will remain to the end of the chapter. Like Cleopatra, like the serpent of old Nile, "age cannot wither nor custom stale her infinite variety." This is clearly proved by the fact that painters continue year by year to paint her, without the public showing signs

of weariness. Perhaps the failure of the artists to reproduce the undying charm of that dazzling pearl of cities is both the excuse and the reason for the pertinacity of the tribe. Woman-like, she eludes them; man-like, they still pursue.

It is difficult for any one to see the often represented Venice with a wholly fresh eye, and to give a flavour



of freshness to familiar topics. It is therefore wisdom to avoid those important monuments which belong to history, and are part of every one's experience, and rather to seek out Venice in her humbler and more homely aspects, in out-of-the-way nooks where no one has painted her before, to go down side canals where old houses and rickety archways harbour the true Venetian, and fascinate the observer who is not too keen of smell. Here are capital opportunities for varied combinations of rich colouring; houses built of weather-worn brick and stone rise steeply from out canals of green water; there are grated windows and red shutters; doorways, picturesque and shabby,

STREET IN VENICE

coloured by the lapse of time, half lost in gloom, but still conveying a sense of beauty, through which the eye catches glimpses of a long-buried past. Here is a washerwoman's house of multi-coloured brick-work, with grass-green shutters; there a strip of red cloth hangs over a carved stone balcony, upon which the light lingers lovingly, while four women employ them-

selves in hanging white clothes upon a line before a yellow-washed wall. After a shower of rain the colours of these narrow waterways show themselves in their finest and most vivid aspects. One notices then the stained marble and the rusted iron-work, for their colouring is brought out and intensified a hundred-fold.

Few have seen the real Venice, the Venice of Ruskin, and Turner, and Whistler. Pictures have been painted by the score, brutal pictures with metallic reflections and cobalt skies, all wonderfully alike, and equally untrue. Venice is not for the cold-blooded spectator, for the amateur, and the art dabbler, but for

the enthusiastic colourist and painter, the man who sees and does not merely look. Visit Venice in a healthy, simple spirit, uninfluenced by sickly sentiment, and one cannot but be amazed and overpowered by its daintiness of form and its fairy-like colour. It is a wonderland that bursts upon one. Venice is a revelation. She resembles a scintillating opal.

When one looks at the city from a distance, its rows of stately pink and violet toned palaces, reflected in the pale green water, appear to be shrouded in a grey veil of atmosphere, like a casket of precious stones encircled by a silver haze, or like a brightly painted ceiling reflected in a black lacquer floor. You are seeing Nature under new conditions, as though standing on your head. Sir Edward Burne-Jones was wont to declare that to paint Italy as she should be painted one must needs live for three thousand years; the first thousand should be devoted to experimenting in various media; the second to producing works and destroying them; the third to slowly completing the labour of centuries. He would never have dreamed of spending a painting holiday beyond Italy, that is, unless he had been permitted to live over five thousand years, and even thus it was his firm opinion that no man could paint

St. Mark's, because it was unpaintable ; mere pigment could not do it.

There is an artistic atmosphere about Venice that affects every one who visits it, however unsympathetic he may be. Harsh voices become modulated, cross-grained, querulous natures sweetened, and even the flat-faced, spectacled tourists, when they step from the railway station into a little waiting black gondola, and glide out on the smooth steely waters of the canal, into a mystic water-city alive with a myriad glistening lights, become unconsciously and despite themselves transformed into beautiful and delightful people. Women who have lived in Venice, when they come to London, should be accompanied wherever they go by a four-wheeler full of Venetian backgrounds, if they are at all desirous of keeping up their reputations as beauties.

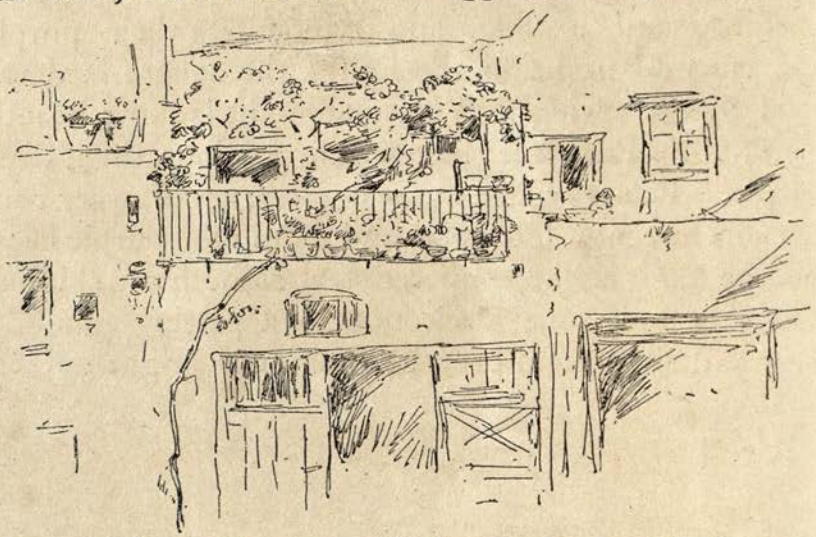
I lived for six months in Venice, and I saw and painted the superb city of the Doges under every

possible aspect. I have seen Venice in early dawn, at midday, in the evening, at night, in rain, and in sun ; and I can never decide at what time of the day she appears most beautiful. Venice at daybreak is like a phantom scene; everything is of a delicate pearly grey, the distant dome of the Salute is illumined with a faintly rosy glow, and the only spot of positive colour is formed by the orange sail of a fishing boat, as it glides noiselessly past. At midday Venice is enveloped in a warm golden light; there are rich red browns, orange yellows, and burnt siennas, all the tints of a gorgeous wall-flower. The clear green water is now alive with orange red sails, but the quay is the centre of life. There a busy crowd is buying and selling silver fish, and fruit and vegetables are being bartered. A pumpkin barge is in the act of unloading its lovely orange and golden freight against a pink palace, flecked with the

A GARDEN, ROME, ITALY

delicate tracery of luminous violet shadow; the sky is light blue overhead, and a long, slim black gondola at the foot of the steps makes the one sombre touch. And, most glorious of all, the whole scene is reflected again with a liquid gleam in the water below. The piazza at this time of the day is alive with countless crowds of pigeons, the sacred birds of Venice, all pushing, and jostling, and stretching their purple and emerald necks to the light; the square is darkened by their wings. Venice at night is most beautiful of all. Purple is the prevailing colour then, deep purple. Palaces which in the daytime are of every conceivable hue, now loom pale and dim in the purple haze, and the water is like tempered steel, smooth and shining. There is only one black note — a passing gondola, swift and silent, and even its interior is bright golden.

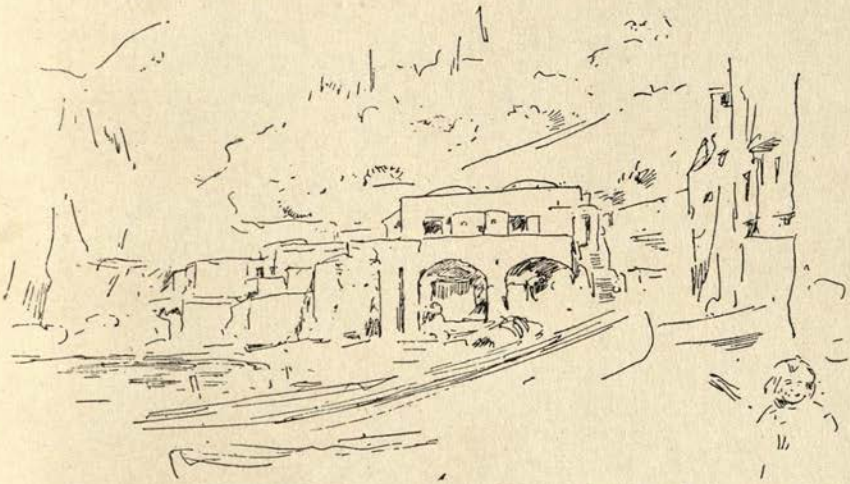
Naples, dearly loved yet much abused Naples, how familiar it all seemed to me! Where had I seen Naples before? In the comic operas, of course, in the scene in the "Runaway Girl," and in coloured picture books. I recognised it at once. There were the same tall white houses with balconied windows, the heat, the laziness, the beggary, the gaiety com-



bined with absolute wretchedness, the crowded streets filled with people, the carriages of all descriptions bowling along at breakneck speed, and, above all, the same brilliant sharp light (limelight), and strange southern feeling about the place. But the Bay of Naples was perhaps most familiar of all. I knew it line for line, and tone for tone. I was neither disappointed nor surprised, for I had seen it so often before. Naples, in fact, behaved to me honourably and just as it should have done; the sky and the

INSIDE SAINT MARK'S, VENICE

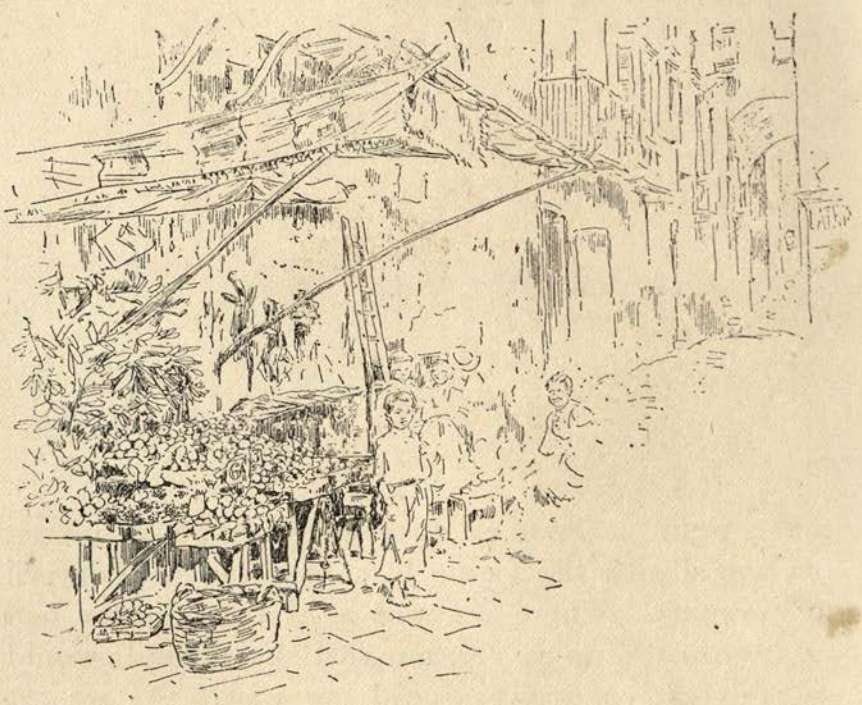
sea were not one whit less blue nor less beautiful than I had expected, and Vesuvius gave out just the correct and orthodox curl of blue smoke, not too large nor yet too small. Her conduct was really commendable and worthy of great praise. Here was no cause for the burying of shattered ideals, but for soothing, purring satisfaction.



We went at first, as does every English tourist, to Cook's, with the vague idea of going to Pompeii or Vesuvius. There we were told that a party had not been made up as yet, but that some people would probably arrive soon: would we wait? As we sat there, travellers poured in by the score, peevish American spinsters, English men and women dressed in hideous unsightly garb such as they would not dare to wear at home, all complaining, and pestering, and haggling about the afternoon's enjoyment in loud, rude voices. Our minds were made up; we slunk

quietly out of the office, hailed one of the many carriages, and drove off into the country.

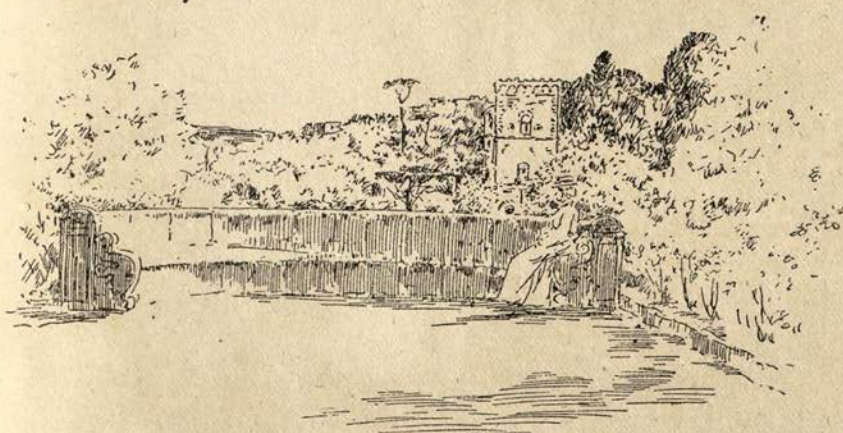
Up a brilliant white road we went, with white houses and white walls on either side of us, over which flowers of red and yellow poured their masses of blossom, past groups of hollow-cheeked, miserable



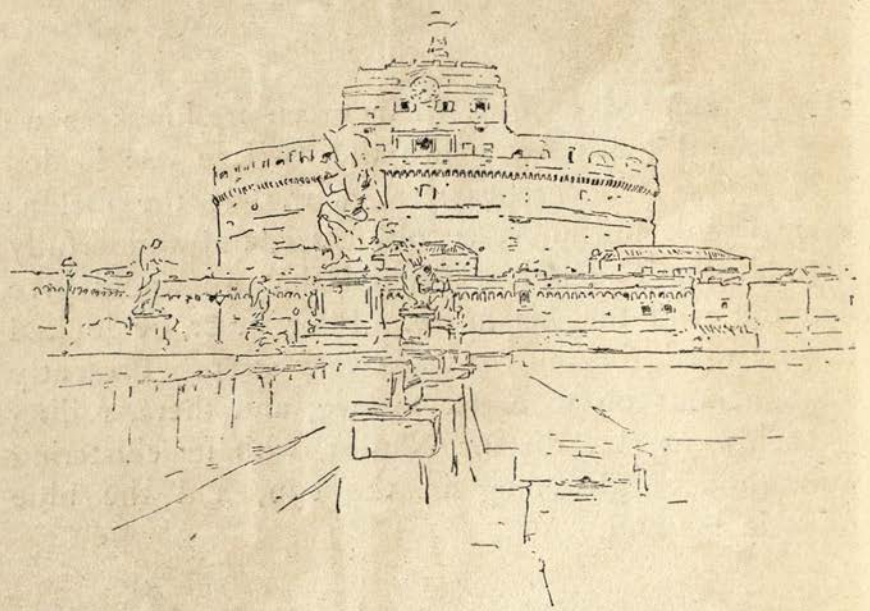
children, half naked, and all screaming for pennies. The heat was overpowering and terribly fatiguing; no wonder that the peasants lay all the day sleeping under doorways and bridges, in any spot where a patch of shade and comparative coolness was to be obtained. A barrow of watermelons and muscatel

A STREET IN NAPLES, ITALY

grapes tempted us with their green freshness as we passed, and for a few pence the carriage was loaded with fruit. The grapes were sour, but the melons opened pink and juicy, as cold as ice, and wonderfully refreshing. The driver begged that we would give him the rind for his horse. Poor beast, he looked terribly tired, for the road was very steep. Presently we came out on to a flat terrace, and there, rolling far below us, lay distant Naples, with its clustering white houses glistening in the sun, and the blue Adriatic beyond.



Up we went again, until we reached the museum, where we were courteously received by the chief official, a gentleman of great culture, who showed us the finest view of all, a marvellous panorama stretching beneath our feet, which interested me not at all ; then we were taken into his own private study, which interested me

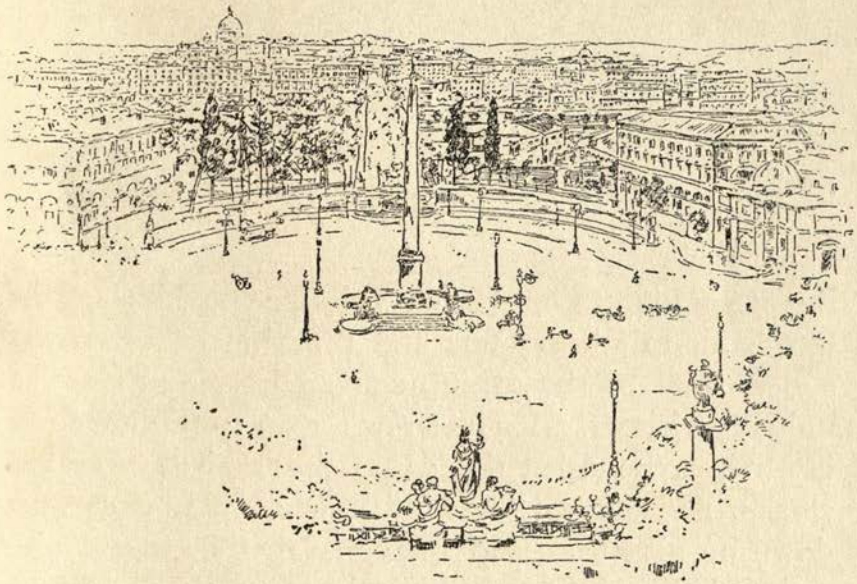


greatly, stocked as it was with priceless gems of sculpture, painting, and literature. An intelligent little dog was trained to fetch whatever his master wanted from the adjoining room by a whisper in his ear. We were directed to visit a garden over the way, where the famous palm tree with Naples in the distance was to be seen.

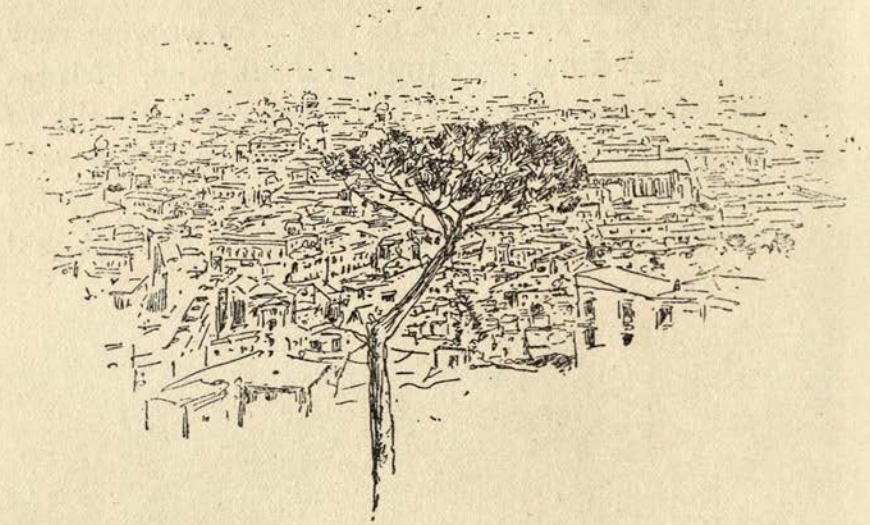
A whining Neopolitan pestered us with requests that we should taste his orange liqueur and buy a bottle,

NAPLES AND THE BAY

only one bottle. This made us cross, for we were very hot, and neither I nor my daughter drink wine. Moreover, the man was blocking our view. To get rid of him we attempted to climb a wall by the side of a well. I got over safely, but in attempting some more graceful and acrobatic feat, my daughter missed her footing, and

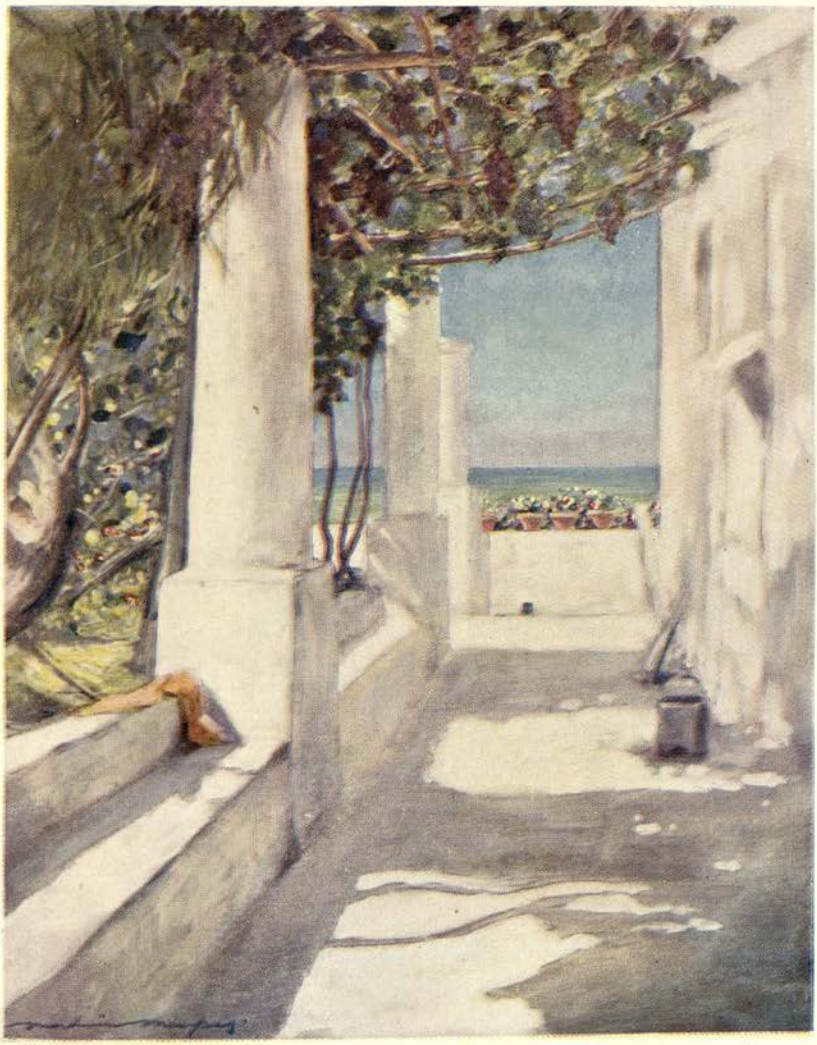


fell headlong into the well below. On rising to the surface, she clung, like grim death, to a small piece of mossy stone projecting from the side of the well, and I, above her, waited in agony of mind, scared and shivering, until ropes and ladders were lowered, and she half walked and was half pulled up. The most excited person of all was the wine merchant, who leant over her, his face deadly white with patches of green, pouring pints of his precious orange liqueur down her



throat, gratis. The garden belonged to him and he was liable to a heavy fine and punishment for leaving a deep well of sixty feet uncovered, ready to entrap unlucky visitors. I never saw a man so frightened in my life, as he dried the damp clothes, lent rugs and cloaks, and offered cases of liqueur. He even went down on his knees, and quavered that he would give us half his worldly wealth if only we would not inform the police.

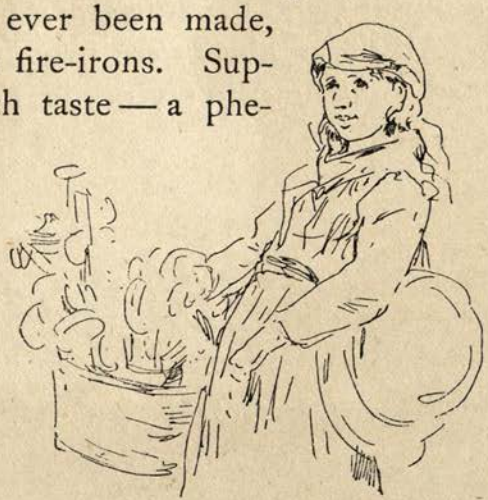
That same afternoon we found our way to the beach, and to the fish-market, the dirtiest, poorest quarter of dirty, poverty-stricken Naples. The sun was setting gloriously, shedding its rosy light over the silver waters of the bay, and I was anxious to secure the fleeting effect. But no sooner was the paint box opened than we were surrounded by dozens of half-naked children, dancing and grimacing, peeping over our shoulders



CAPRI, ITALY

and under our arms, almost lifting us off the ground with their jostling and pushing, and entirely obscuring the view. Every minute they seemed to gather in force and number, until I should think there were quite three hundred children assembled. The brilliant colours were fast fading from the sky, and the only thing to be done was to make for a blank wall some yards off and plant our backs against it. We started running; of course the children were overjoyed, and ran too, fighting and falling over our feet. There was obviously no work to be done that day, and we went off in despair. Unfortunately, we gave some of them money, — a fatal mistake, for they followed us out into the streets and all over Naples to the very door of our hotel, begging and screaming for charity.

The older one gets the more one realises that Italy is the centre of the world, the cradle of all true art, a country which has produced the finest specimens of every article that has ever been made, from pictures down to fire-irons. Suppose a millionaire with taste — a phenomenon which probably does not exist — wishes to furnish his London house with the best of everything, he must needs go to Italy. Once there, he can procure every single thing necessary to

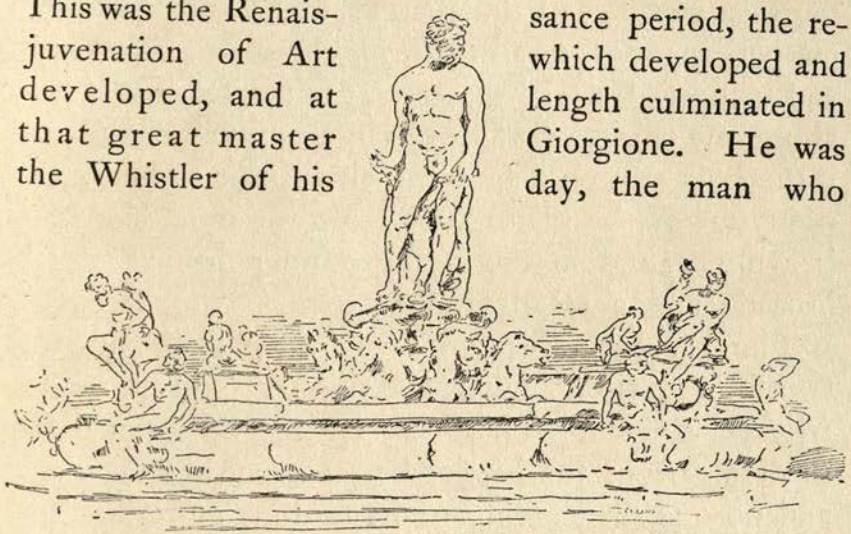


his establishment, except perhaps his carpets, which the Orient can best supply. What is finer than the Italian furniture? Certainly not the Dutch, which by comparison is mere kitchen stuff. The famous Henri II chair was built upon Italian lines. Where else can you procure velvets equal to those from the looms of Genoa? What is finer than that metal work by Benvenuto Cellini? Where can be procured finer examples of glass, silver plate, architecture, painting, sculpture, and literature than in Italy?

All these things were produced at a time when men had something to say or do, and it was an exertion to

REMAINS OF ANCIENT ROME

give out what was in them, when princes vied with one another in gathering together all the finest students of Europe, the best caligraphers, masons, wood-carvers, poets, and craftsmen of all kinds that were to be had. This was the Renaissance period, the rejuvenation of Art which developed and developed, and at length culminated in that great master Giorgione. He was the Whistler of his day, the man who



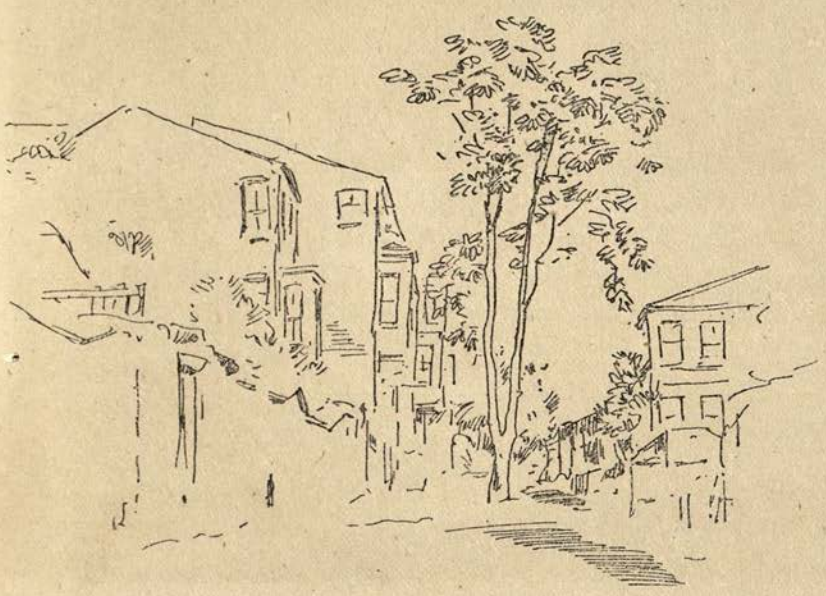
opened the door, the one great modern genius of his period, whose influence remains, and is felt to this day. Whistler would never have existed but for Velasquez, and Velasquez in his turn would not have existed but for Giorgione. It was he who first began to paint landscapes as backgrounds to his pictures instead of the usual conventional designs. Imagine this young Giorgione, with his new ideas, and his sweeps of golden colouring, suddenly appearing in a studio full of men, all painting in the correct academical style established at the period. Such a man must needs influence all his fellow students; even Giovanni Bellini, the Watts

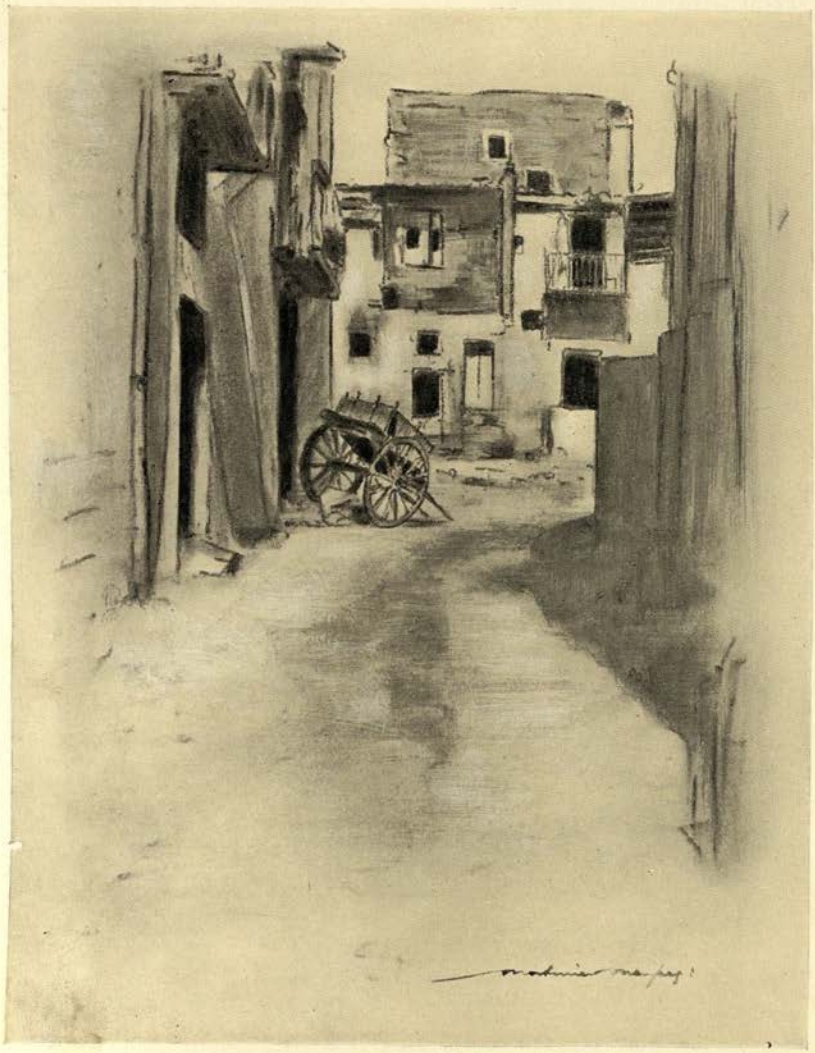
of his day, acknowledged the young man's genius and almost unconsciously began to mingle Giorgione's style with his own.

This great master produced no more than twelve or fourteen works, and the picture of his that appeals to me perhaps most of all is an altar-piece of the Virgin and Child at Castel Franco. It is painted in the pure Giorgione spirit. St. George in armour is at one side, resting his arm on a spear which appears to be coming right out of the picture, while on the other side there is a monk, and in the background a banner of rich brocade and a small landscape.

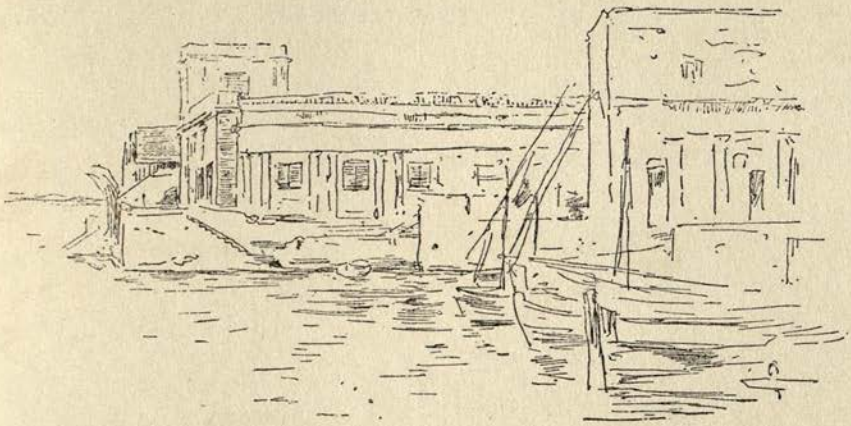
The Florentine school seems to have begun with Giotto, and risen higher and higher until it reached Michael Angelo. These two masters have established the scale from the lowest bass to the highest treble, and no one since seems to have done more than play within that scale. There have been grand variations and glorious melodies, it is true; but no one has yet gone an octave further.

SICILY



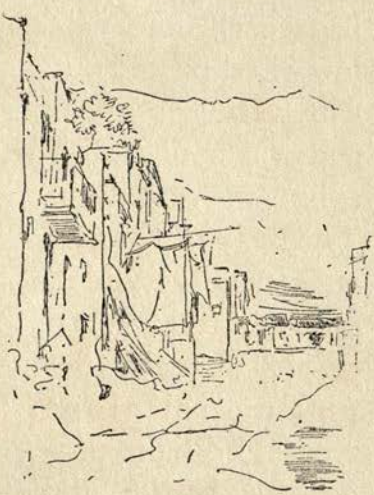


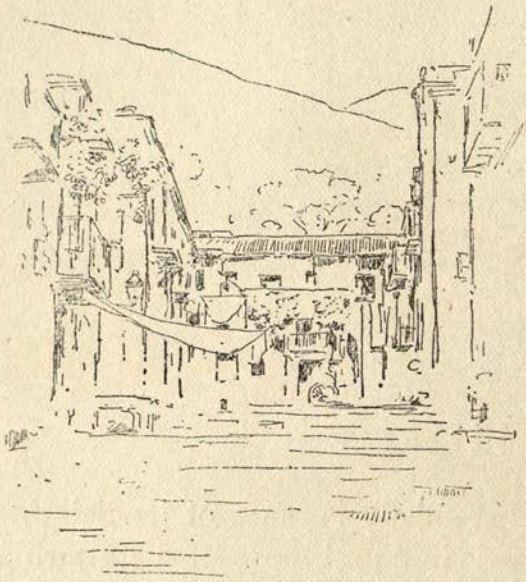
DESERTED HOUSES



SICILY

PALERMO impressed me chiefly because of its delightful situation. A vivid indigo blue sea, a glittering white town set in emerald green, and backed by scraggy grey blue mountains,—this is the first glimpse one catches of the Sicilian capital on arriving by steamer, and it puts one in a good humour with the place at once. As every one knows, Palermo is exceedingly rich in vegetation; groves of orange and lemon trees, prickly pears, aloes, and cactus plants thrive everywhere. But such scenery as this is not restricted to Sicily, which differs, in fact, very little from any southern country in Europe.



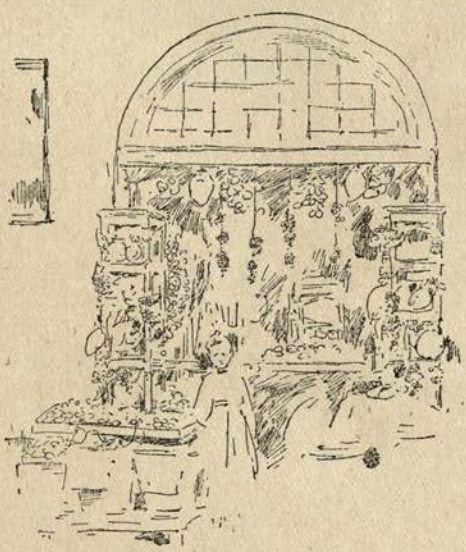


Now, when I look back upon my stay there, the only features that I can remember as being remarkable for their distinctive nature and as being especially characteristic of Sicily are the mule or donkey carts called *carette*. These are gorgeously painted spring-carts, every spoke of which is an excuse for an extra bit of colour. You will see perhaps a chrome yellow wheel picked out with verdigris green and ornamented with a line of vermilion. The body of the cart is generally violet, smothered with painted panels, depicting religious scenes, brilliant processions, battles, and

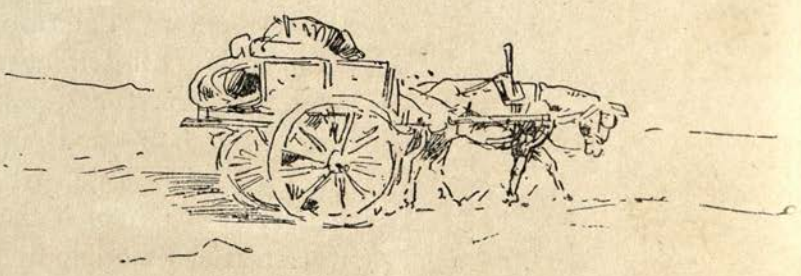
PALERMO, SICILY

figure subjects, — all just about as vivid as — and some of them more elaborate than — many of our academy pictures.

But most entertaining of all is the donkey or horse, generally a very poor, lanky animal. We laugh at him, and he, poor beast, is fully conscious of his ridiculous appearance. Shame and degradation are depicted in his melancholy eyes, as he trundles the Royal Academy about the streets of Palermo. He feels himself the skeleton at the feast, with his hair tied up in gaily coloured ribbons, as though he were a frisky poodle dog with nodding plumes on his head, tassels and beads hung about his body, and a little em-



broidered saddle on his back. He alone fails to grasp the humour of the situation; life to him is grim, earnest, and so, so melancholy.

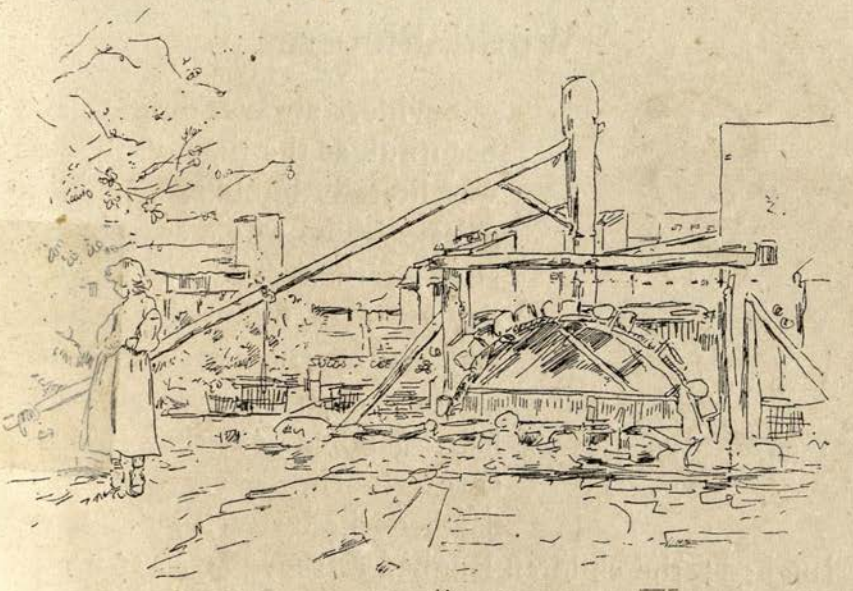


ROYAL LIBRARY OF THE BOMB

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF PALERMO

SPAIN

A COURTYARD, SEVILLE, SPAIN.



SPAIN

It is rather sad that Sunday, and the recurrence of religious festivals, such as those of Holy Week, should be considered fit occasions for bull-fights, cock-fights, fairs, balls, and national gaiety and enjoyment by these pious but buoyant Spanish people. So thought I to myself on my first morning in Spain, as I watched from the point of vantage of my balcony the light, joyous crowd of eager Sabbath pleasure-seekers, surging through the streets of Seville. Sad indeed! but sighs and regrets cannot alter the characteristics nor the habits of the people of Spain that have been established for generations; bull-fighting is the national sport, and will doubtless remain so until the nation itself ceases to exist.

Seville, always bright and beautiful, at the time of my visit was literally bubbling over with gaiety. The whole city seemed alive; girls decked out in holiday attire of flowered kerchiefs and gay petticoats, with roses in their carefully dressed black hair, laughed as they passed through the evergreen and flag-bedecked streets; the boys laughed; the children laughed as they played at being bull in an imaginary gutter arena, charging at an outstretched coat; every one laughed on their way to the bull-fight. Their gaiety was infectious. Even I, whom the thought of a bull-fight revolted, hastily threw on my coat and hat, and calling my companion to follow me, bounded down the stairs two steps at a time, eager to breathe that same intoxicating joyous atmosphere, to be swept along in the strong, pure sunshine with this crowd of happy laughter-loving children. Everything I saw that day fascinated and held my attention. I passed down narrow streets with windows and balconies that almost met overhead; past loosely built booths of green boughs filled with tarts, sugar toys, and reeking cookery; past men and women dancing on a space of green turf, reserved for that purpose; they filliped their fingers, rattled castanets, and stamped enthusiastically on the ground, as they beat out the measure of an accompanying guitar.

The bull-fight itself impressed me principally because of its unreality. It never occurred to me that those dainty darts covered with gorgeously coloured ribbons, and thrown with such delicacy and precision on to so satiny and jet-black a target as the sides of the bull, could possibly cause pain or suffering to that great, mild-eyed rocking-horse of an animal, mechanically bobbing backwards and forwards. The arena, I thought, placed itself perfectly, and formed an excellent combination of colour. And as to the audience, closely packed tier upon tier, as it seemed to the very sky, with their myriads of fluttering fans and the sun shining full upon them, they were comparable to nothing less brilliant in colour than a flower-bed or a carpet of jewels. It would be audacity to attempt to describe the effect they produced. The only detail in the whole performance that I really did not approve of were the gentlemen on horseback. They were loaded with metal and protected on every side themselves, and their one object seemed to be that their horses, half-dead, pitiable creatures, should be slaughtered on the horns of the bull. The Portuguese method I consider to be far more humane and considerably better sport, if the term may be applied in this con-

nection. There, it is considered as a great degradation for a man to lose his horse, which is almost invariably from the royal stables. The bull-fight itself held no very great attractions for me, and now,

when I come to look back upon my travels in Spain, nought but a very faint and somewhat faded picture remains to recall the much vaunted glories of that famous spectacle.

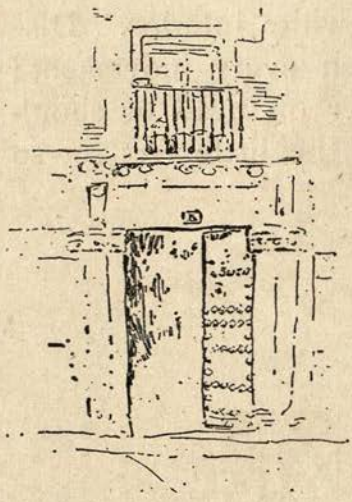
Uppermost in my thoughts is the scene of a thousand or more Spanish women entering a large marble hall in single file. The sun shining through an opening in the wall, gleamed brightly on the head and shoulders of each girl as she passed, lighting up the glossy hair adorned with its single rose which made a

COURTYARD IN SEVILLE

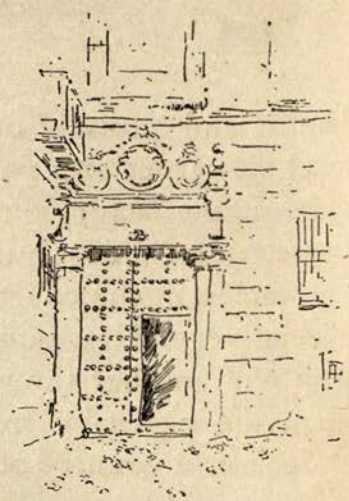
jewel-like spot of colour in the white interior. Distinction and charm attended their every movement; the mantillas were arranged either on head or shoulders with a studied grace; and the little feet set so

daintily and proudly on the ground were "worthy to tread the carpet of a palace." All these details give to these simple factory girls, busy at their work of rolling cigarettes, an almost queenly dignity. And then to see the women in the courtyards at their domestic duties: peeling vegetables, pumping water, and chatting gaily with one another the while, or smiling brightly down upon the passer-by from their balconies.

Spain is a country of courtyards, brilliant and sunlit. The general colouring is brilliant white, picked out



with small, concentrated touches of colour, so that the scene literally sparkles. Unlike India, where one gets sweeps of rich colour, the Holy Land, Turkey, or Italy, where the sun is a coloured sun, and the tones are golden, here the sun is white, the tones keen, sharp, and silvery, the whole is a bed of silver sprinkled with bright-hued flowers. To reach this brilliancy with mere pigment is no easy task. I tried painting upon Chinese white, but produced mud. In these courtyard scenes colour is dragged in wholesale. It hangs from out of every window, appears on the shutters in emerald green, beautifies a whitewashed wall with clumps of yellow and orange.



The women, too, made fine patches of colour; but so queenly was their carriage and so dignified their manners that, although they voluntarily sat for me, it seemed to me both a sacrilege and an insult to offer them a reward. I was desperately shy, and managed, as I stole out of the yard under the fire of their handsome laughing

eyes, to lay a small pile of silver for each duchess on the centre pump. Afterwards I learnt that they would have been quite satisfied with a penny, but I could never have brought myself to offer it.

It was in one of these courtyards that I met a Spanish artist, also painting. "Come with me to my home," he cried at once, smiling and bowing delightedly. His manners were so charming and so courteous that I accepted, and followed him into a magnificently decorated studio. The place was filled with Japanese ivories, cloisonné and satsuma. I expressed my admiration for some of the finest pieces. "Take them," cried my generous host. Overcome with joy, I thanked him warmly for this magnificent gift, for I was then in the throes of a mania for collecting Japanese curios. What a superb country is this Spain, thought I, how generous, how open-hearted are her people! He had given me too

much though, and I felt that I must admire nothing more. But, determined to strip his studio, this generous Spaniard followed my eyes whenever they alighted on any especially beautiful objects, chairs, pictures, jewelry, everything he possessed, and he presented them to me with many compliments. By the time that I turned to go he had bestowed such an enormous number of gifts on me that I began to meditate. Like a flash, I remembered hearing a story of a Britisher who had had presents showered upon him by a Spanish gentleman, but on wrapping them up into a parcel and preparing to depart, he had received a bullet in his brain from

the amiable foreigner. Such is the custom of the country. Therefore I accepted a small picture from my new friend, and sent him one in return that same afternoon. One cannot be too particular in these matters.

Dear, stately, courteous Spain, how I love her southern colouring, her rich sonorous language! Idle, apathetic, half asleep, she is picturesque in her decay. What romances and legendary stories one weaves around Spain as a child! Don Quixote, Sancho Panza, all surely lived. In Madrid how delightful it must be, thinks the girl, to be serenaded, like Juliet, by a guitar underneath one's window,

and to throw a rose to the handsome troubadour beneath as a reward for his song. In Toledo how thrilling, thinks the schoolboy, to see bold men in armour dashing about the streets on horseback with drawn swords of Toledo steel flashing beneath their velvet cloaks; and to see duels, tournaments, bull-fights, taking place every day just as common occurrences.

My preconceived ideas of Spain were not entirely disillusioned. At all events my experiences in Toledo, the centre of heroic romance, were by no means devoid of excitement, and, in a way, of tragedy. To begin with, I arrived there at midnight, and was bumped all over the city in a little cart down twisting alleys with tall grey walls on either side, over huge cobble-stones, and there was never a sign of life or habitation anywhere. We drew up at length before a little flat-roofed house, my hotel. The proprietor, a ruffianly-

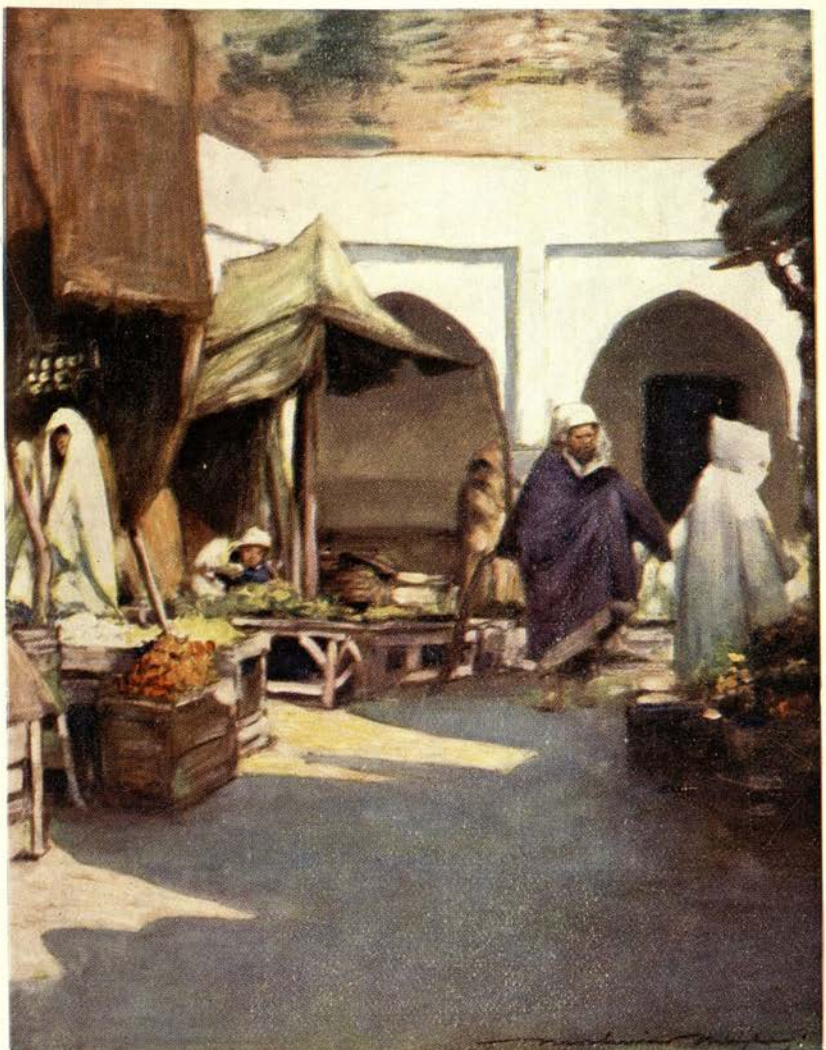
SEVILLE, SPAIN

looking man, spoke not a word of English, and as my knowledge of his language was nil, our intercourse was carried on by means of pantomime. With much difficulty he at length understood that I required a bedroom and some supper. He led me up innumerable stairways and intricate passages and left me with scant ceremony in a room which to my consternation I discovered was full of nothing but washing-stands. There were at least thirty-three of them. Granted that this article of furniture is certainly very useful, since one must wash, still, when there is no bed, no chair, no dressing-table, no carpet, nothing but washing-stands, one vaguely wonders how one is going to spend the night.

After this dispiriting survey, I found my way to the dining-room by much diligent search. There I was ushered to my seat by a most ferocious-looking waiter, who glared at me in a very bloodthirsty manner. He flicked his serviette viciously about my face, rattled the plates,

and dashed off to get my meal. Returning with a basin of soup he set it down with a bang before me, but no sooner had I laid my spoon down for an instant than he snatched it away, sat down to the table, and wolfishly swallowed the lot himself before my eyes. I was frightfully hungry, but so murderous was his aspect that I dared not utter a word of complaint, and patiently stifled my feelings, waiting in silence for the next course. Presently he brought a kind of small bird, and pressing his oily fingers down upon the table, he stared hungrily at me while I ate it. His face twitched, and his eyes blinked, and every mouthful I swallowed seemed to give him positive pain. At last I was compelled to lay down my knife and fork and wait until he should withdraw his face. In an instant he had dragged the bird by one leg from my plate, devoured it as he stood there, bones and all. I never knew from that day to this what the food at that Spanish hotel was like, for I never got an opportunity. I do not remember whether I spent the night in a basin or in a jug; I fancy it must have been a combination of the two.

MOROCCO



TANGIER, MOROCCO

MOROCCO

HAD Tennyson's enchanted heroine, who sat serenely alone in her grey tower watching the many-coloured stream of humanity drift over the surface of her mirror, riding down to Camelot under the blue sky, through the golden grain, had the fairy lady but been a painter, very simple, true, and dainty, no doubt, her "notes" would have been. To paint Tangier, that marvellous city to which three continents lend whatever is most fantastic, gorgeous, and grotesque, one would need such a clear and impartial mirror as that of the Lady of Shalott's to be one's guide in choice of subjects.

It is a weird, unreal world, this into which one has strayed. It is easier to believe that that old Arab,

who emerges from the shade of a narrow street, sedate, imperturbable of aspect as the mule he rides on, has come straight from the pages of the "Arabian Nights" than that he is an ordinary mortal, bent on some worldly twentieth-century business, and that he is

probably *en route* for the market. His profile, like a finely moulded mask of bronze, is sharply defined for an instant against the dazzling white of a sunlit wall, and then he is gone, while a score of other figures, as surprising as he, come and go in a bewildering dream of colour and quaint form. How magnificent are the types! Can it be that these figures are unconscious themselves of their grand poses, and the swinging grace of their movements? Even the round-headed little urchins playing in the dust by

the roadside are fine, with their drollery of feature and a few scanty rags.

The dominant quality of the scenes is their blaze and breadth of light, and light so penetrating that all colours are harmonised and all crudeness swal-

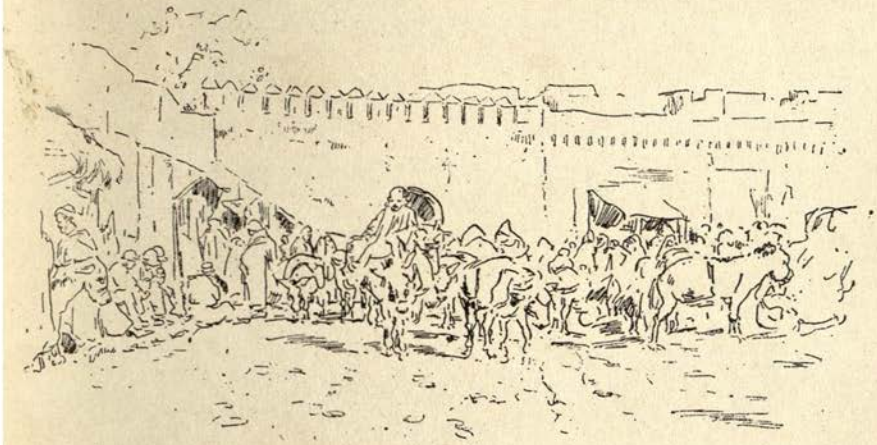
lowed up. It is the radiance of the African sun which brings together such exquisite combinations of colour as are to be seen at every turn. Here is a sunlit yard, with a space of dusky foreground leading up to a little group of men and animals, the most strongly accentuated details being a mule's pointed ears; the shadow under a wooden shed is sharply crossed by a slender pole in light, while in the background are some arched gateways delicately defined. Under the awning of a little shop there is a glimmer of bright-coloured stuffs and figures in the shade. A slipper of yellow leather

and a bare sinewy ankle above it come prominently into the light. One notes it down quickly as an attractive detail, with the pretty little shadow of the slipper on the ground. Almost before one has time to sketch it, the owner of the foot, a dusky figure just before lost in the mass of shadow beneath the low, dark archway, steps suddenly forward into the sunny street. The unexpected flash of light crossing the gateway is almost painful in its brilliancy.

To try after effects of sunlight in Tangier is at once the most fascinating and most hopeless problem of the painter, who has but his colour box of dull pigment to compete against nature and her tones of fire. What can one do with a sky which shows deep and purple blue, but is in reality so light that the whitest paper in shadow is dark beside it?

Much has been done in this city, which the brilliant but somewhat

STREET SCENE IN TANGIERS



theatrical painters of the French and Spanish schools have in a measure made their own, but a day spent in wandering through its streets and courts is enough to show how much there still remains to be done in the way of fresh and artistic impressions. It is strange, after a few hours' journey, to find oneself transported from modern Gibraltar with its fortresses and its soldiers into the ancient Moorish town of Tangier where grand old Orientals drift about with all the dignity of their ancestors, where the sun blazes down with true Oriental brilliancy, bleaching everything it falls upon with the intensity of its rays. The houses are white, the walls are white, and even the background is white, so that every little splash of colour shows out with tenfold distinctness and force. It is as if you were to mount a brilliantly

painted water-colour drawing upon a white Whatman's mount where the colours obtain an added value, whereas were you to substitute brown for white half their brilliancy would be lost.

Grand, glorious sun, harmoniser and purifier, what would Morocco do without you, I should like to know? When piles of refuse are thrown out of every house in a long street, if the sun were not in attendance waiting to act as dustman, how long would the people live? They would die off like flies within a day. When a man falls into the river, or goes out in a shower of rain he waits for the sun to come out and dry his garments, or rather his garment, for the Moor usually wears but one long white robe.

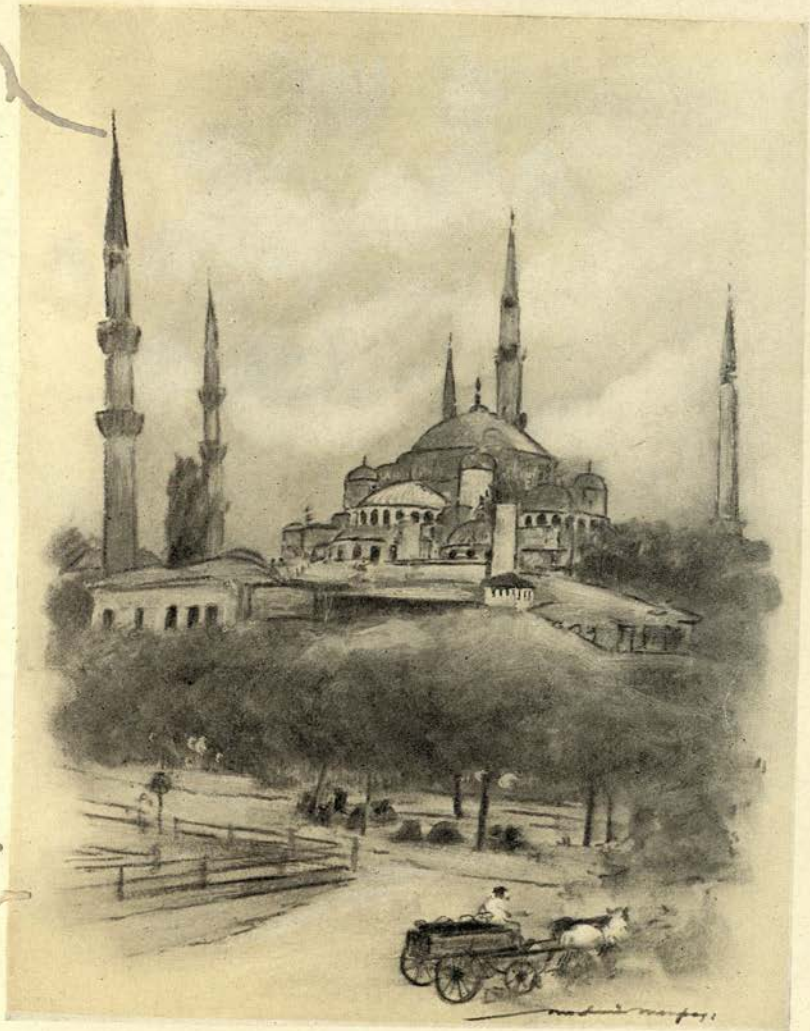
Walking is a matter of some difficulty in Tangier as the streets are one mass of holes and boulders, but an

A COURTYARD, MOROCCO.

artist should be oblivious to such minor obstacles as these. If so, and if he can become indifferent to odours unsavoury and sounds unharmonious, he will be thrice blest, for there surely never was a city so choked full of subjects and little glowing pictures as Tangier. The market scenes are perhaps finest of all, crowded as they are with detail; camels, horses, and mules are accompanied by their handsome owners with features as finely moulded as those of any Greek statue; piles of fruit are kept by women muffled in shapeless garments; and red-

brown oxen are standing about in the sunny square. The Moor's few efforts towards cleanliness seem to be centred on the outside of his house, which he takes pains to keep snow-white. Continually one may see the men and children of a family white-washing their walls with little lumps of tow in order to preserve the pristine purity.

TURKEY



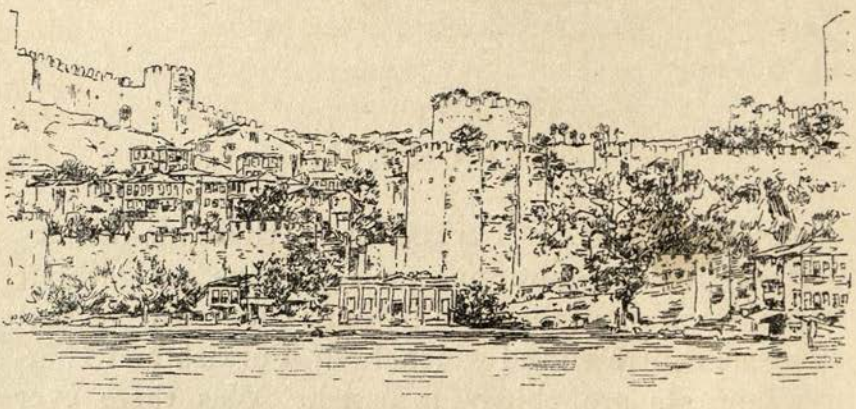
MOSQUE OF SAINT SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE

TURKEY

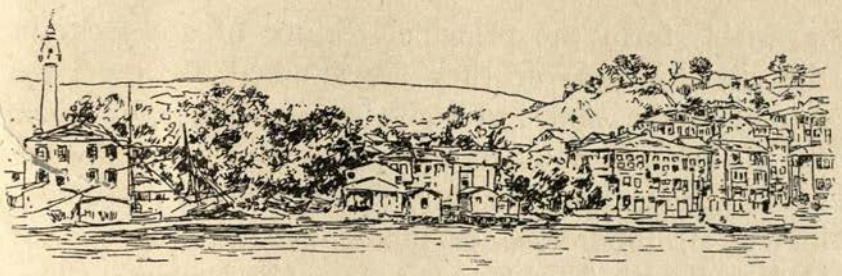
WHEN one thinks of Turkey, one's thoughts instinctively fly to Constantinople and perhaps not without reason, for after all the "Sick Man's City" may be said to be the centre round which both Turkish and English interests are chiefly focussed. Was there ever such a city, so gay, so full of colour, so strangely new, even to the travelled eye of an artist? Turkey is a place that one has always dreamed about; when a child, one remembers it above all others as being a far-away place, the home of Turkish delight, of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, of long curved daggers and red fez caps, and also as being remarkably adaptable for puns and charades. When grown up, one regards Constantinople as a much overrated place, impoverished and tawdry, and its inhabitants as opium-eating knaves; yet it is interesting because of its critical con-

dition, and because of the poor, sickly, frightened Sultan who lives there. When one actually visits Constantinople, all political questions and preconceived ideas, childish and mature, lose themselves in wonder and admiration.

A glittering white city rises out of a sea of brightest amethyst and it is honeycombed with miles upon miles of square windows; there are occasional grey,



curved domes topped with golden crescents, gaily striped mosques and hundreds of slender snow-white minarets tinged with palest rose from the sunrise sky, — such is the picture of Constantinople from the sea of Marmora. When, however, one comes to dive into the streets and byways of this wondrous fairy city, the first glorious impression fades somewhat. Other senses besides that of vision are brought into play and tickled not so agreeably. One must seek nothing else save the picturesque in Constantinople, and



keeping that in view one will be more than satisfied ; if one makes use of one's nose and ears, or thinks of bodily comfort, by the end of the day one will be thoroughly discouraged and unhappy. The smells are offensive, the rough streets hurtful, the heat is oppressive, and the dirt repellent. But keep the mind nobly fixed upon the search of the picturesque, as upon a star in the firmament, heeding not the odours, or the streets, or the heat, looking upon all dirt as tone, and the artist's soul will revel and rejoice in the myriads of pictures that surround and almost overwhelm it with their wealth of beauty.

There are those magnificent fountains which almost

invariably form the principal feature of any scene in the city. Wherever they are situated, by the river side or in the centre of some market place, or under the shadow of a noble mosque, they are always crowded with beggars, street vendors, children, dogs, pigeons — in fact all the refuse of the Constantinople streets. Old turbaned Turks squat serenely beneath wide-spread, vivid green umbrellas, selling highly coloured dainties into the nature of which one does not care to inquire — probably rice, blanc-mange, and maize-cakes. Then there are vermicelli makers, lemonade and sherbet sellers, letter writers, innumerable trades of all kinds are carried on in the shadow of the street fountain. Every one comes here for water, both rich and poor, soldiers and civilians, Armenians and Turks,

SCUTARI, TURKEY

men in fact of every nationality and calling. There are pictures to be seen at every one of these fountains. That one near the mosque of St. Sophia swarms with pigeons; thousands and thousands of them push and flutter around, smothering the fountain and the courtyard with their jewel-like plumage of purple, green, and grey. Another is a picture in itself, a veritable Sultan's palace in miniature with domes, marble pillars, flights of steps, gratings and doorways. It possesses a gate wrought in bronze of the most fairy-like structure, in its delicacy almost resembling lacework. There are inscriptions and poems in green and gold — in fact it is more like a temple than a fountain, a temple erected to some water sprite.

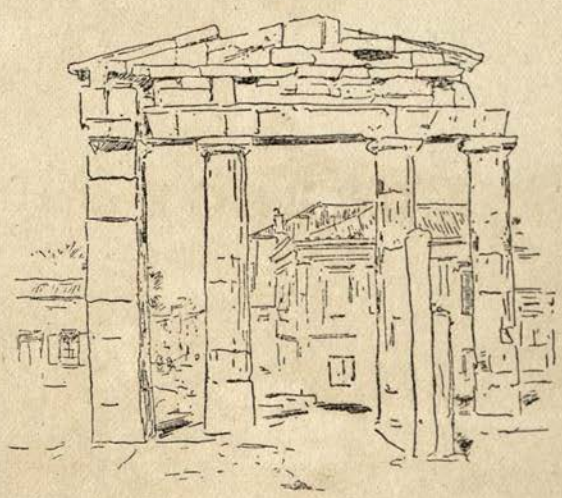
The streets of Constantinople were my delight. They literally teemed with colour; the wares were

bright, the sellers were bright, the buyers were bright, and the sun shone down brightly — alas! too brightly, like a ball of fire — upon all. Water carriers, oil carriers, soldiers, policemen, women muffled to the chin in mummy-like robes, black slaves, Turkish gentlemen

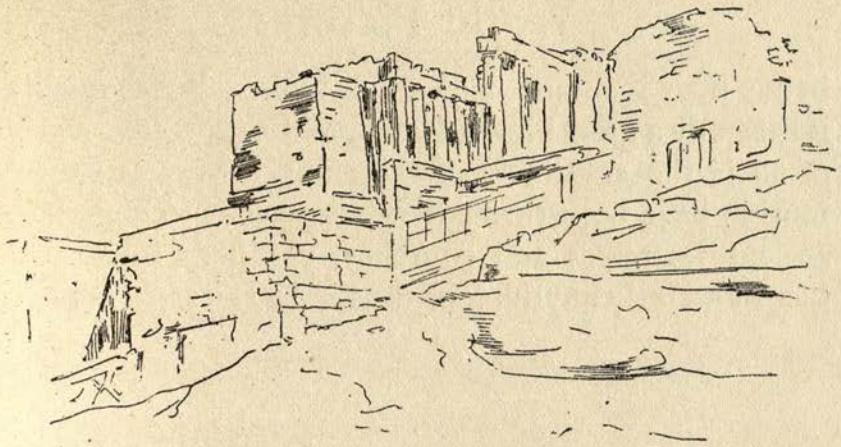
dressed in black European clothes with fezzes ranging from new crimson colour to weather-beaten lobster shade, thronged the dark narrow streets, or rather lanes. On either side were the regular Turkish shops, little low cupboards with slanting slabs on which the bath towels, slippers, daggers, silk goods, and the usual rubbishing stock in trade were displayed. Those most admirable liars and cheats, the salesmen, sat cross-legged, smoking and drinking coffee as though

business were the very furthest thought from their majestic minds. Then there are streets filled with men of a totally different stamp, there are the workers, patient and industrious. Gold beaters, carpenters, jewellers, pipe-makers, fez-makers, tinkers, tailors, and candlestick-makers, all hard at work. Here I spent most of my time, for the atmosphere of the hammer and anvil were more congenial to my mind, than the close-scented air of the bazaars.

GREECE



TOWER OF THE WINDS, ATHENS



GREECE

GREECE is practically virgin soil, for no one that has been to Athens, Corinth, Thebes, or any of these ancient places seems to be capable of telling anything about them. They have seen them, and that is nearly all the information one can gain. Books give one hardly any tangible idea of the country or the people, and altogether it is with a mind as clean and blank as a slate, and absolutely devoid of any preconceived ideas, that one first visits Greece. One has not even seen pictures or photographs of the place, all one can think of is ancient Greece. From that standpoint it is, of course, sadly disappointing.

The blank look on the faces of some of the expectant tourists when they reach Athens is pathetic, and sometimes amusing. At first there is deep silence, no one utters a word: Athens is totally different from what every one expected, yet they are not going to

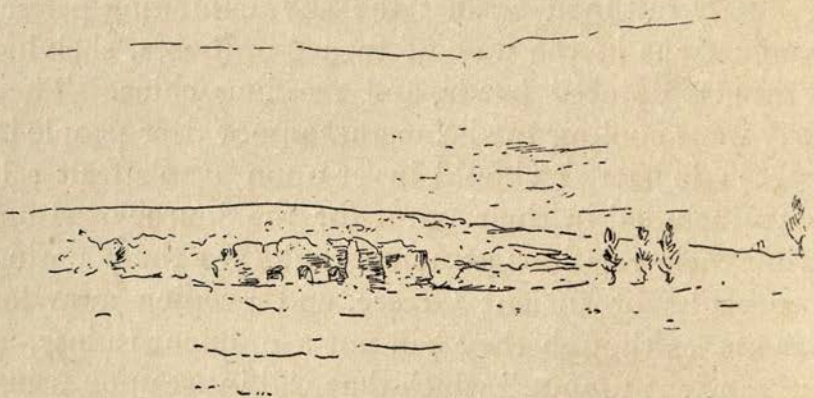
betray their ignorance by word or look. But the reality is naturally a great blow to them, and the greatest shock of all is the scantiness of the ruins. Many of these tourists have been through Mexico, which abounds in ancient fortresses and churches, yet here in Athens there is scarcely anything of the kind to be seen. Then

again, among the first things they look for are fine antique figures in the streets. They search in vain for living Venuses resembling that of Milo and for Dianas in all sorts of out-of-the-way places, even among the post-office girls, and the young women selling socks in drapers' shops. They have all studied in the antique room at South Kensington, working laboriously for weeks on end upon black sooty drawings from the Antinous or Discobolus, they all know what a fine Grecian profile should be like, and when

the crushing absence of such outlines in the streets of modern Greece is at length brought home to them, they are all feverishly anxious to illustrate to one another what is really meant by classic line; and one sees these plain people turning sideways so that their profiles may

be clearly outlined against the sky, exhibiting perfect abominations in the way of turned-up noses, shelving foreheads, pointed heads, and receding chins. They really want cooling medicine, these poor dear people in Greece; in fact, I should insist upon Eno's fruit salt being included in their outfit for the journey. I am sure if their relations at home could see them poring over books of ancient Greece, and pegging away for dear life, as though they had not a moment to lose, at the "ancient tongue" which they will insist upon using

to every one they come across oblivious of snubs, they would disown them at once as hopeless lunatics. Their naïve questions about art are also most quaint. One man I met fully expected to come across oil pictures in gold frames down among the ruins! These people will give you the benefit of all sorts of newly acquired information as to frescoes and tempera, the words rolling glibly off their tongues with the greatest gusto. That they make the best of the situation, truly, nobly and heroically, it must be admitted, but modern Greece is a very heavy blow to their sensitive, art-loving souls.



However, they are consoled by quoting pages of classical poetry and sketching one another's profiles against the Acropolis at sunset.

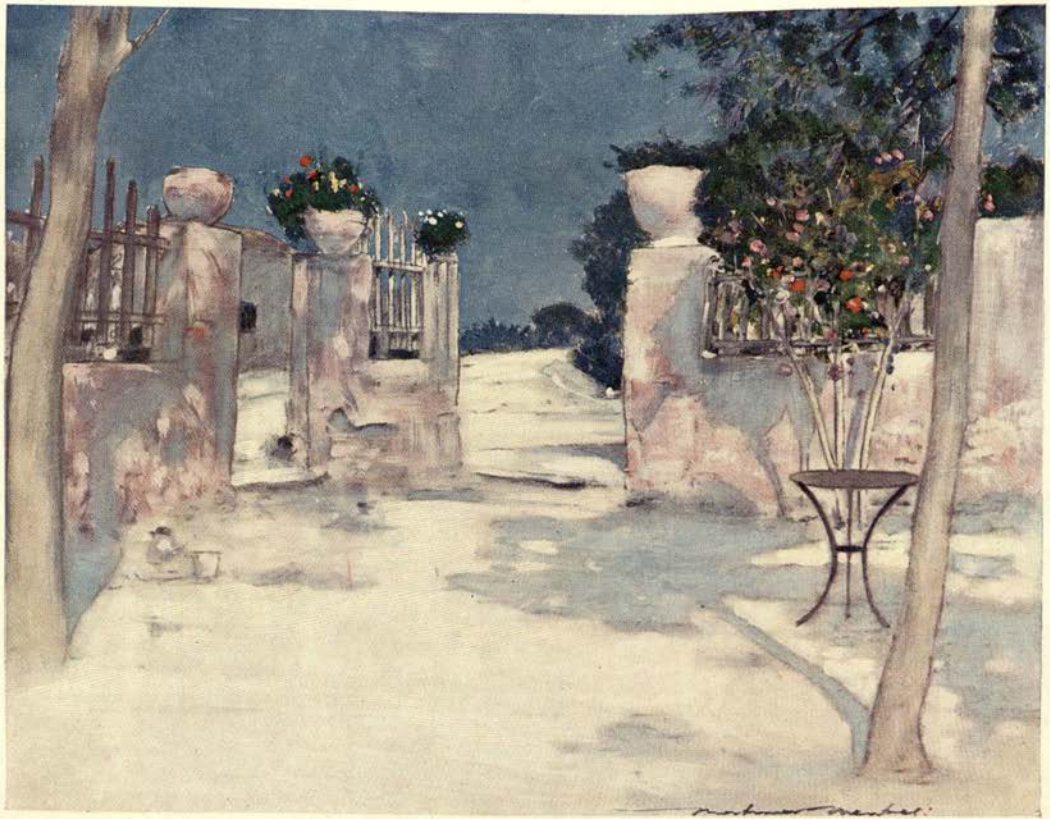
Seriously, to enjoy oneself thoroughly, one should make a long stay in Greece, wandering dreamily about the sites of the famous cities, peopling them once more

in imagination, cruising amongst the islands where the people are living perhaps the purest and most simple lives of any nation in the world, and where one sometimes finds groups of truly beautiful Grecian types, especially among the young boys.

One sees many curious garbs in Greece, but perhaps the most striking of all are those of the great men's servants in Athens. They resemble peacocks as they

strut about in stiffly starched kilted skirts and bright yellow boots, presenting the appearance of something between a ballet girl and a Scotchman. Brigandage is still carried on to a great extent almost all over the country, and in the cities the men will glare fiercely at you, greatly preferring to get money out of you by force and robbery rather than by cringing.

In Athens there is an almost inexhaustible supply of white marble from the quarries on Pentelicus, not far away, and the people make use of these advantages to a very great extent. But perhaps, after all, it is not a very great advantage, for the glare of the brilliant white marble houses, and the suffocating marble dust lying thick upon the roads, is almost too much for any one to bear. One's eyes positively ache to-day in modern Greece, when closely inspecting the statues,



A GARDEN, ATHENS, GREECE

the palaces, and the architecture; and one can quite believe that such a nation of artists as the ancient Greeks could never have stood this cruel whiteness in such a clear atmosphere, and that they must have modified its brilliancy in some way by staining the marble. It sounds like vandalism to talk of staining white statues, and so it would be if carried as far as an attempt to stain, for instance, the Elgin Marbles. We are not as highly cultured in matters of art as the ancient Greeks, and we cannot attempt to stain or paint any relief work without degrading it. We do not seem to have

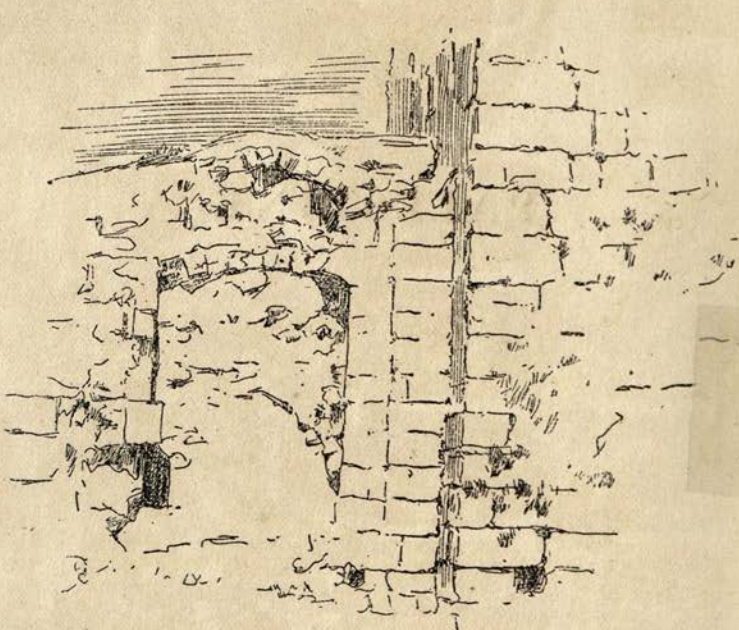
sufficient artistic sense to accomplish it successfully, and other than in a clumsy and somewhat vulgar way. The Japanese successfully paint and gild their grotesquely carved wooden gods and Buddhas, and their small representations of Daimios, because they make pretence of realism. If one attempts to stain a marble statue, as some of the modern French school have done, so as to suggest realism, changing the pure, cold lips to vermilion, and the blank eyes to blue orbs, one invariably ends in creating nothing else than a Madame Tussaud's waxwork. This extremely delicate task must be done purely from the decorative standpoint, as it was done by the ancient Greeks. What desecration to colour the Elgin Marbles! It would be just as terrible and almost as impossible as it would be to try to complete the missing arms of the Venus of Milo. Almost every sculptor in the world has had a try at this task, but no man has

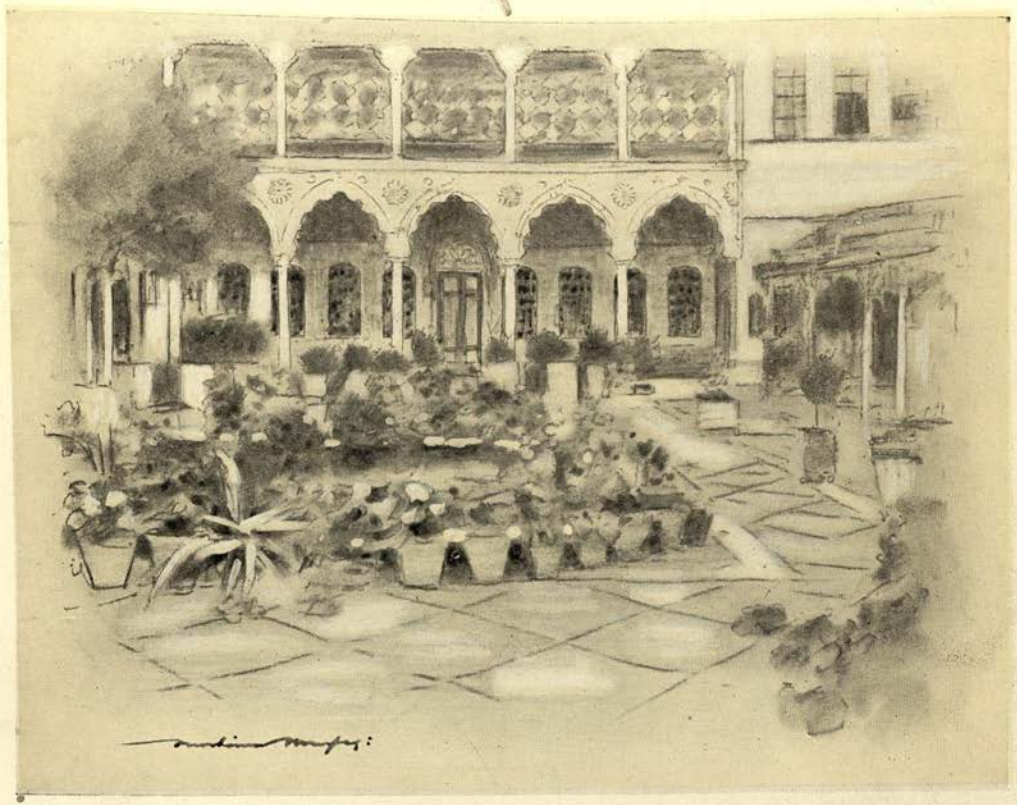
succeeded in producing anything but an absolute figure of fun.

There is perhaps no scene in all Greece that impresses one with such a deep sense of awe and majesty, that brings back such a mighty flood of sacred memories, as that to be witnessed when standing amid the ruins of the Acropolis on a moonlight night. Athens lies around one, sleeping beneath the stars, while the Parthenon, grey and classic, with its impenetrable black shadows, and its pillars silvered by a full moon, is outlined in sharpest relief against the purple night. An almost unearthly silence hangs over all. Such a scene as this cannot easily be forgotten, nor can it fail to provide food for serious and sacred thoughts, even to the most frivolous and flippant among us.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC

PALESTINE





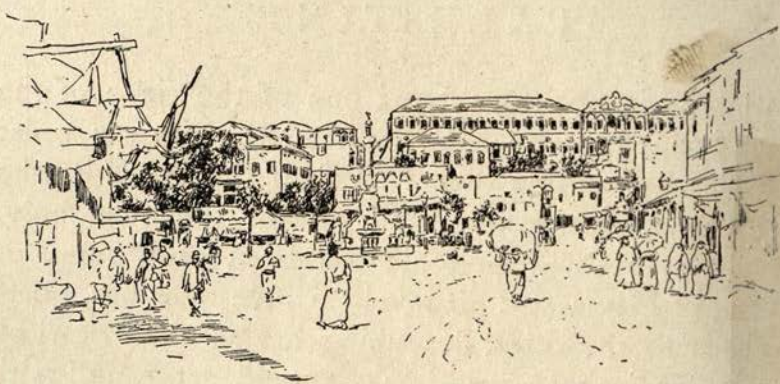
COURTYARD IN DAMASCUS

PALESTINE

DAMASCUS is not considered one of the cities of the Holy Land, yet who that has seen the city can resist including her among them? Of all Eastern cities she is the most picturesque, and one of the most holy. Almost everything possible has been said, sung, or written of Damascus. Travellers rave over her, poets laud her to the skies, describing her as "the Pearl of the Desert," or "a priceless diamond set round with emeralds." The Damascenes firmly believe their city to be a terrestrial reflection of Heaven, her gardens those of Eden, and her rivers the two that watered Adam's paradise. Even the prophet Mahomet himself, when looking down upon Damascus for the first time, was so struck with her beauty, that he turned away and refused to enter her gates, making the long famous remark, that as man could enter only one paradise, he chose the one above.

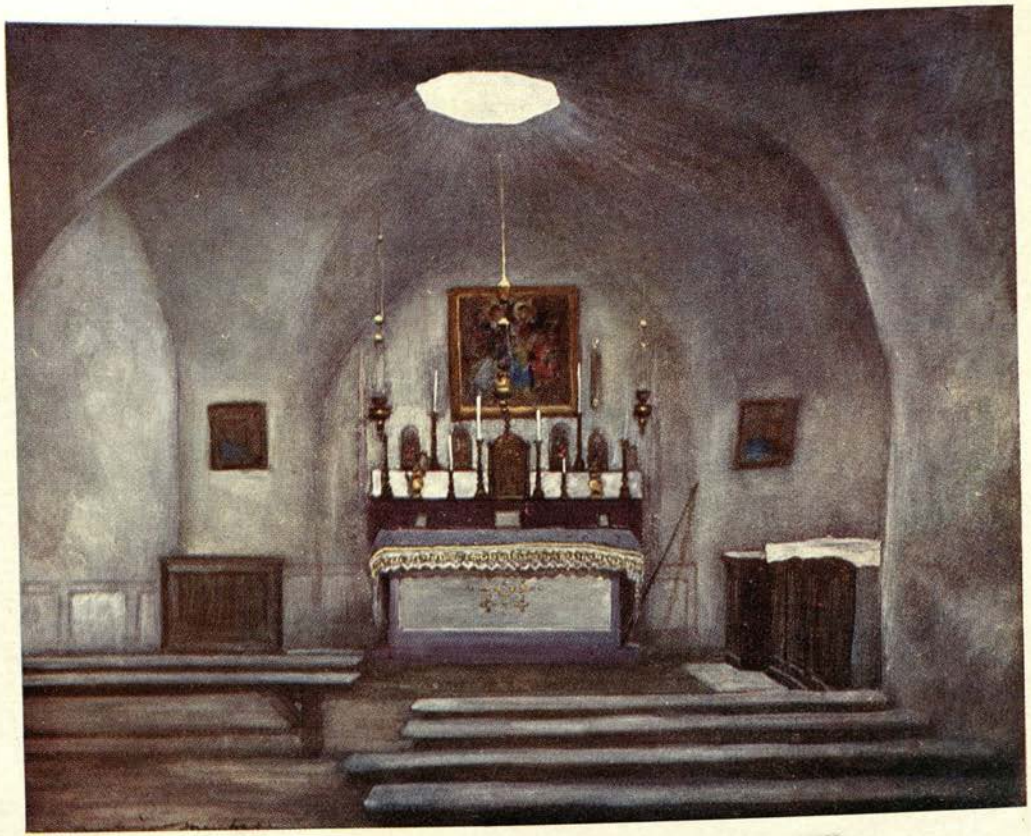
The train journey from Beyrout to Damascus was for the most part long and tedious. The day was

broiling hot, the carriage filled with natives and their babies, and we wound up and around the mountains at a snail's pace for hours and hours. Nearing Damascus the scenery became flatter and more interesting. We passed gardens luxurious with fruit, and forest trees,—poplar, palm, walnut, citron, pomegranate, and fig; past vast lonely plains where great cities probably once flourished, but inhabited now by jet-black goats



that looked like overgrown poodles, their long hair smothering legs and eyes with a thick shroud. Swarthy-complexioned, black-bearded shepherds walked in front, playing weird music upon a pipe. These last delighted me, they confirmed my juvenile ideas of shepherds in the Bible so thoroughly, dressed as they were in long, loose garments of brown, striped with buff, and with white cloths on their heads, wound round with coils of tightly bound goat's hair.

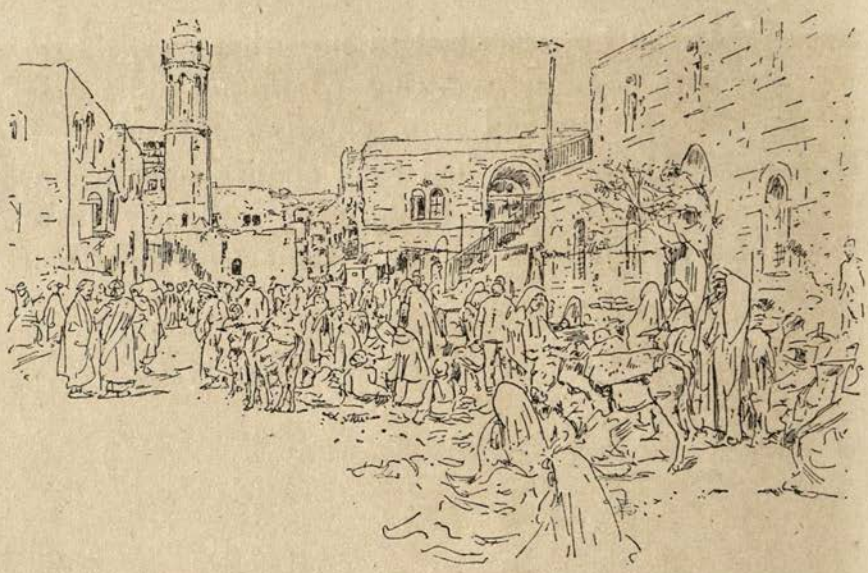
Damascus itself, the oldest city in the world, soon lay before us,—"a long white oasis in a mass of



THE HOUSE OF ANANIAS, DAMASCUS, HOLY LAND.

green." It can be described in no other way. I do not agree with some writers that Mahomet did a wise thing when he refrained from entering the walls of Damascus. If they but had their chance over again, they would camp upon Mahomet's hill, say these writers, feast their eyes on the distant city, and then

depart. For myself, I think that if Mahomet was anything of an artist, with an eye for colour and the picturesque, he missed a great deal in not seeing the streets and houses, market places and bazaars of the city. The streets, it is true, are narrow, crooked, and filthy, while high houses and mud walls hide the magnificent gardens without. Yet they act only as a background of grey monotone upon which the

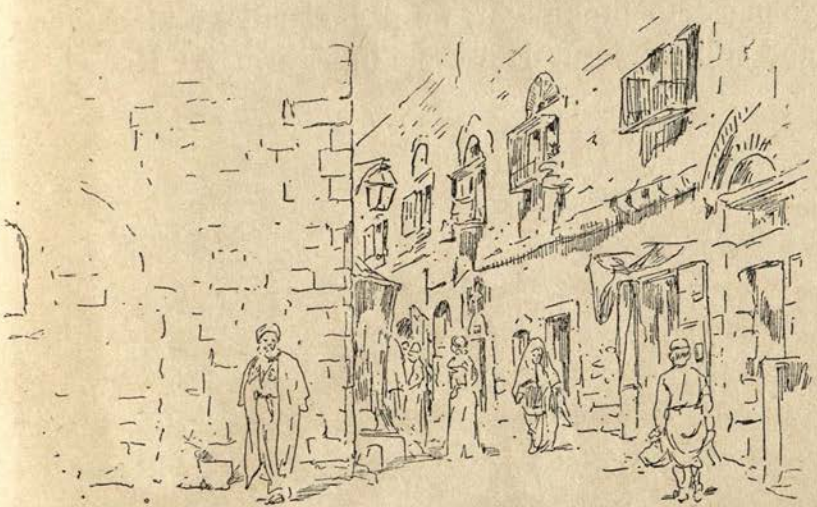


sparkling, vivacious, human picture is portrayed and silhouetted, all the more clearly for the contrast.

This is an Eastern city more rich and prosperous than any I have yet seen. It is thronged to overflowing with people. Caravans, camels, and donkeys, laden with merchandise from Bagdad and from Mecca, rich men's carriages, and the swarm of foot-passengers make walking or driving difficult in the narrow streets. No disappointing European costumes are here; every one dresses in the beautiful flowing garments of the East, mostly white with bright-coloured turbans and sashes. Real old biblical patriarchs with long grey beards sit smoking their chibouks, and money-changers and scribes drive a thriving trade at the street corners. The houses, though ugly in the extreme on the outside with their tawny square-topped roofs and mud

walls, disclose perfect visions of Eastern beauty when once the doorway is passed. You find yourself in a many-coloured marble-mosaic courtyard with the blue dome of the sky above for a roof; a marble fountain, half covered with creepers and flowers, and tossing silver sprays high into the air, is in the centre, while all around are alcoves in the walls decorated most gorgeously and furnished with divans and cushions, where the women recline, smoking and chatting and looking out upon the fountain. We were taken to see the reputed houses of Ananias and Judas, the tomb of Mahomet's children, Naaman's ancient dwelling place, where ghastly lepers mostly congregate, and other interesting spots.

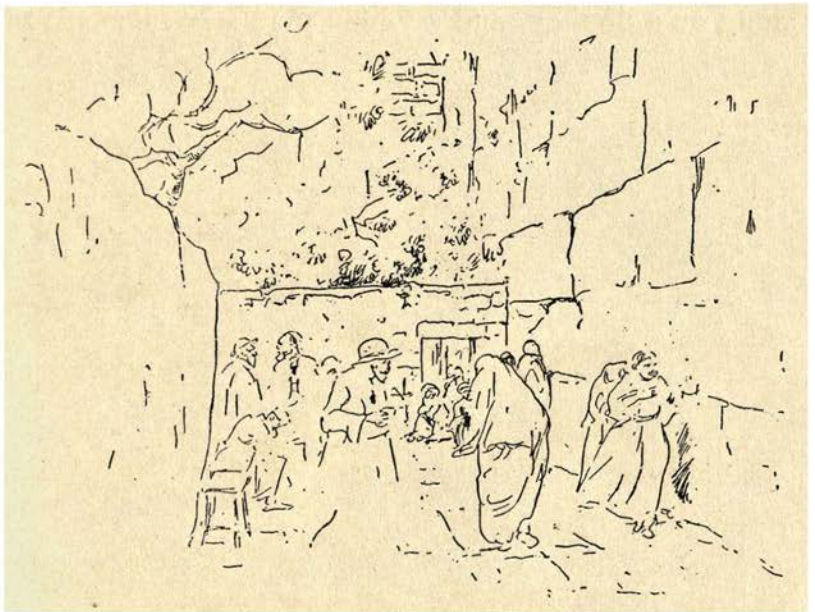
But we must pass on to Jerusalem, — the holiest city on earth. One can get there from Jaffa, either by carriage or train. I went once by train with some



ladies, who, as we were winding slowly up a hillside, caught sight of some lilies of the field growing near by. Nothing would satisfy them but picking some. The engineer very obligingly stopped the train for us, and we got out, guard and all, and gathered great bunches of these lilies, which were more strictly pink anemones. On another occasion I made the journey by carriage, starting at two in the afternoon and arriving at twelve o'clock at night. It seemed as though we should never reach the Holy City. Sunlight changed to moonlight, we passed village after village, and still no Jerusalem came in sight. At Ramah and

ON THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

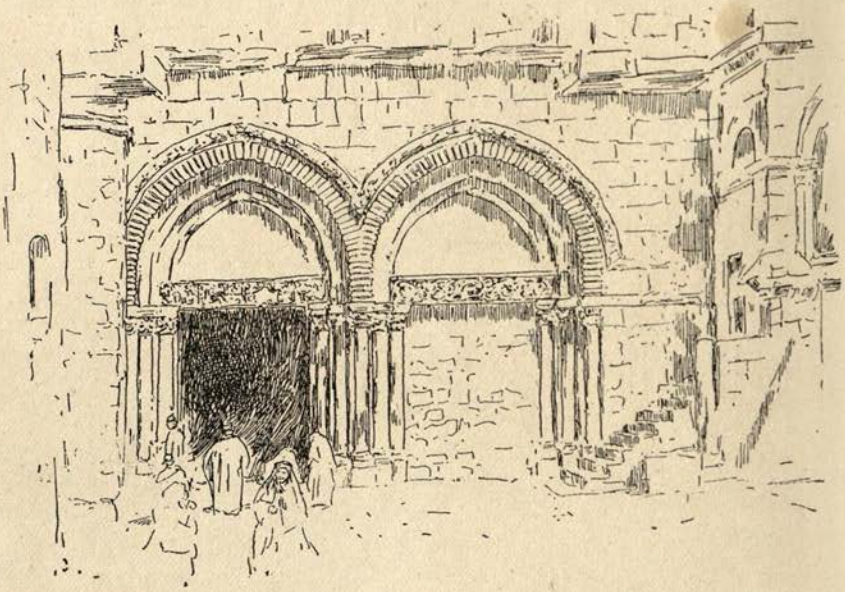
Beroth we stopped to rest the horses and drink coffee. In a light as clear as day we could see hordes of camels and goats resting with their attendants on a dusty roadside. A band of real Bedouins rode up on gaily decorated horses, and leaped off before the



animals had stopped. Each man unstrapped from his saddle a small Turkish rug, spread it upon the ground and began to pray, bowing slowly backwards and forwards towards the East.

After many false alarms we eventually reached Jerusalem. Nothing much was to be seen that night. We wound up a very ordinary street into a still more ordinary American hotel, and that was all. After staying a week in Jerusalem I came to the conclu-

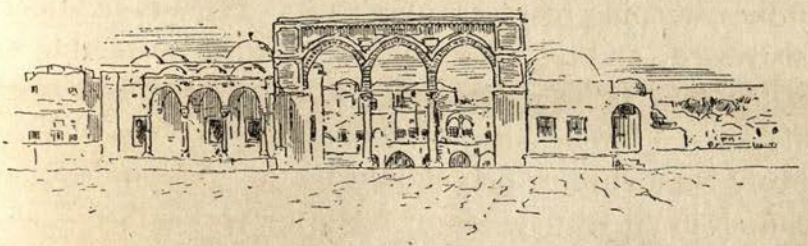
sion that it was no more than a little old grey town, and not so very old either, save for Saladin the Magnificent's ancient red wall which surrounds it. Walking through Jerusalem is like walking through the pages of the Bible. An old woman comes riding along on a donkey, and a young man steps forward to



greet her dressed in the Bedouin Arab costume, — a robe that differs not one particle from that which Abraham wore. The old woman, bending forward, salutes him on the forehead, and one can hear those two superb Arab voices mingled together in greeting, although the language is unintelligible.

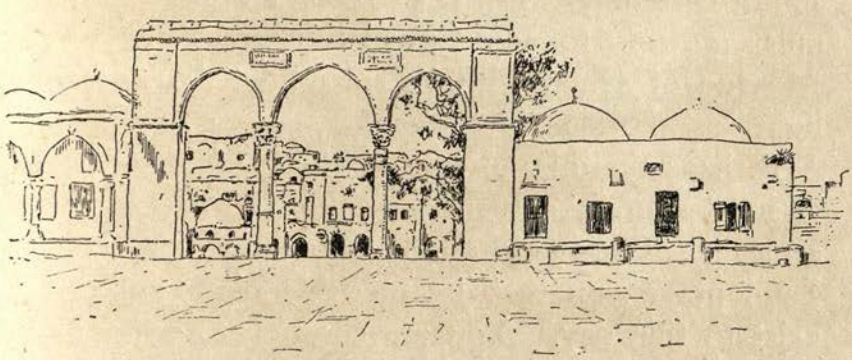
The streets of Jerusalem are full of dirt and superstition. There are bazaars arched over and shaded, where embroiderers, tinsmiths, and shoemakers con-

JERUSALEM, HOLY LAND.



gregate, but they lack the brilliancy and busy movement which characterises most Oriental bazaars. No carriages or camels can pass through the narrow streets or lanes, but only troops of donkeys, laden with immense loads of garden produce. Many places of interest are pointed out in the city, among them the house of the rich man Dives, who never existed save in a parable, and the very stones on which our Lord stood while being judged; they could not have been less than forty feet below.

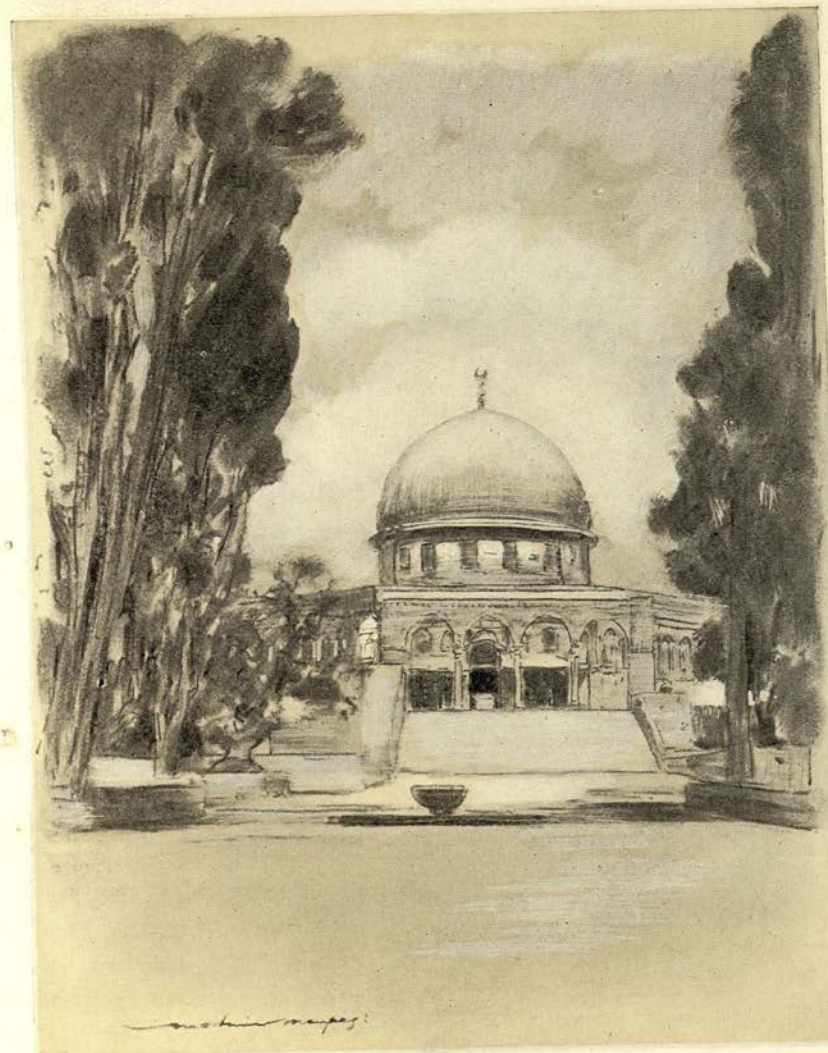
I went to the wailing place of the Jews, where they congregate every Friday to lament over the scattering of their nation. I saw an old Jew, dressed in a black robe, kneel down and press his head against the huge



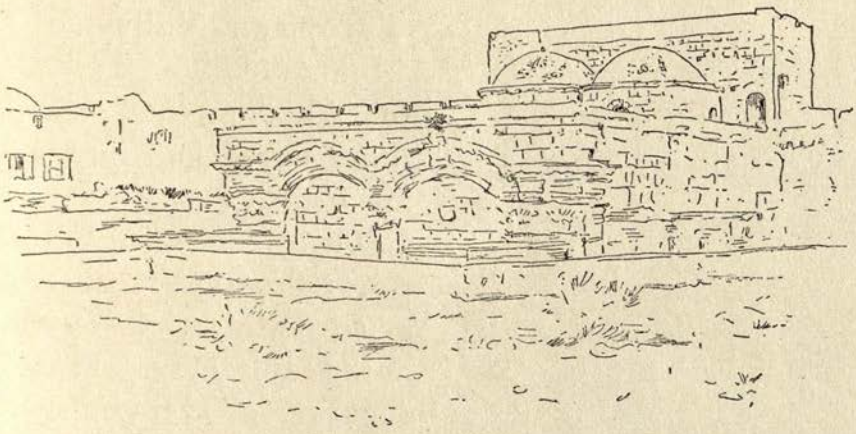
stones, weeping real tears over them. He was genuinely distressed, and it made one feel quite miserable to watch him as he watered the stones of Solomon with his tears. I went also, of course, to the church of the Holy Sepulchre, which should be the most interesting church in all Christendom. Noisiness, confusion, and gorgeousness were its characteristics. Men of all nationalities and sects worshipped at their separate

altars, and the babel of voices in that sacred place was almost deafening. For peace, deep and beautiful, you must go, not to any Christian church, but to the Mosque of Omar with its splendid "dim, religious light."

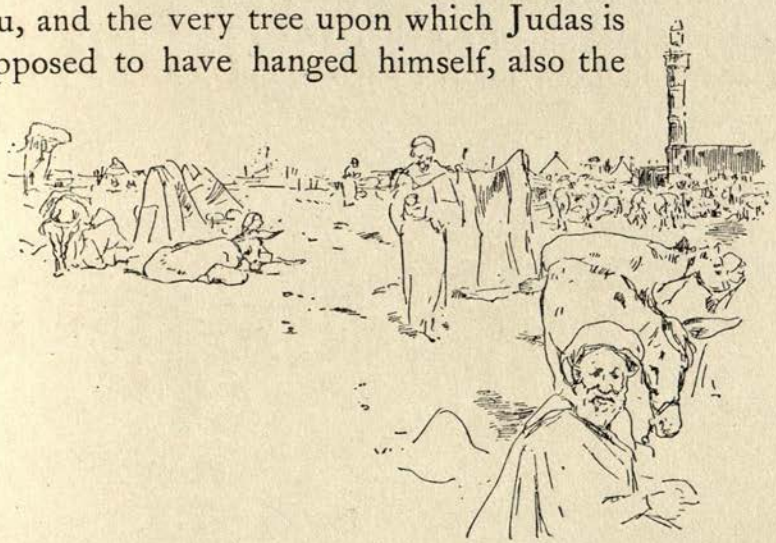
Perhaps there is no spot in the Holy Land which is so absolutely authentic as the Garden of Gethsemane. The very same trees under which our Lord prayed on that last terrible night are said to exist to this day. You are allowed to walk round

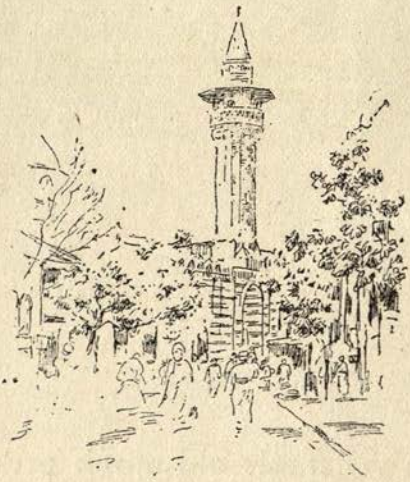


MOSQUE OF OMAR, JERUSALEM



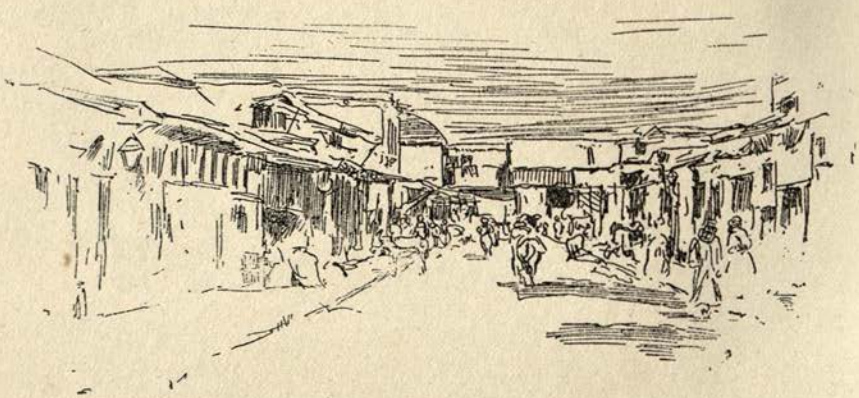
the paths, and on leaving, a venerable old monk presents you with some olive branches. The pool of Bethesda is exactly what one imagines it must have been when the angel came to trouble the water, so different from the pool of Siloam, which is filthy in the extreme. The field of blood is shown to you, and the very tree upon which Judas is supposed to have hanged himself, also the





Tyropœan Valley, the Mount of Olives, the tomb of Absalom, and many other sacred and interesting spots.

There are many dangers, however, to be avoided whilst sight-seeing in the Holy City. Fierce dogs descended from those amiable animals that chased Jezebel swarm outside the city walls; and as they are not needed to chase the sheep, they chase the people for sport, and viciously too. Then the place abounds with slippery steps down which one invariably toboggans; the narrow streets are full of baby donkeys, which push and jolt you unmercifully, and you have to keep a sharp lookout for the bayonets of Turkish soldiers



MOUNT OF OLIVES, HOLY LAND

which protrude unpleasantly near. The "growlers," too, are a source of great inconvenience to portly travellers in the Holy Land, as sometimes the floor gives way, and you run round Jerusalem with the cab. These are but minor drawbacks, however, to a city which is at once the most pathetic and most interesting in the world. Even the most flippant of tourists cannot but be impressed with the sacredness and grand solemnity of the place. Their cockney tones become unconsciously modulated to

awed whispers whilst walking in the Garden of Gethsemane, or when overlooking the Holy City. A strange poetical sadness pervades it which one can neither account for nor ignore. You feel at once that here in very truth is the scene of the divine tragedy.

I remember once standing on the roof of a house in Jerusalem, looking down upon the city stretched round about my feet, every grey-white house, each little window, shining in the silver sun. The clouds overhead hung black and threatening, but the sun illumined the city, turning everything to a most heavenly silver, as though Nature herself must needs favour it. Jerusalem looked like a lovely little silver model of a town and it produced an effect upon me that I shall never forget. The tomb of Rachel is the spot where tourists from Brixton or elsewhere congregate in abundance. It is a beautiful spot overlooking the corn-fields where Boaz met Ruth, and where the shepherds kept their flocks by night.

BETHLEHEM

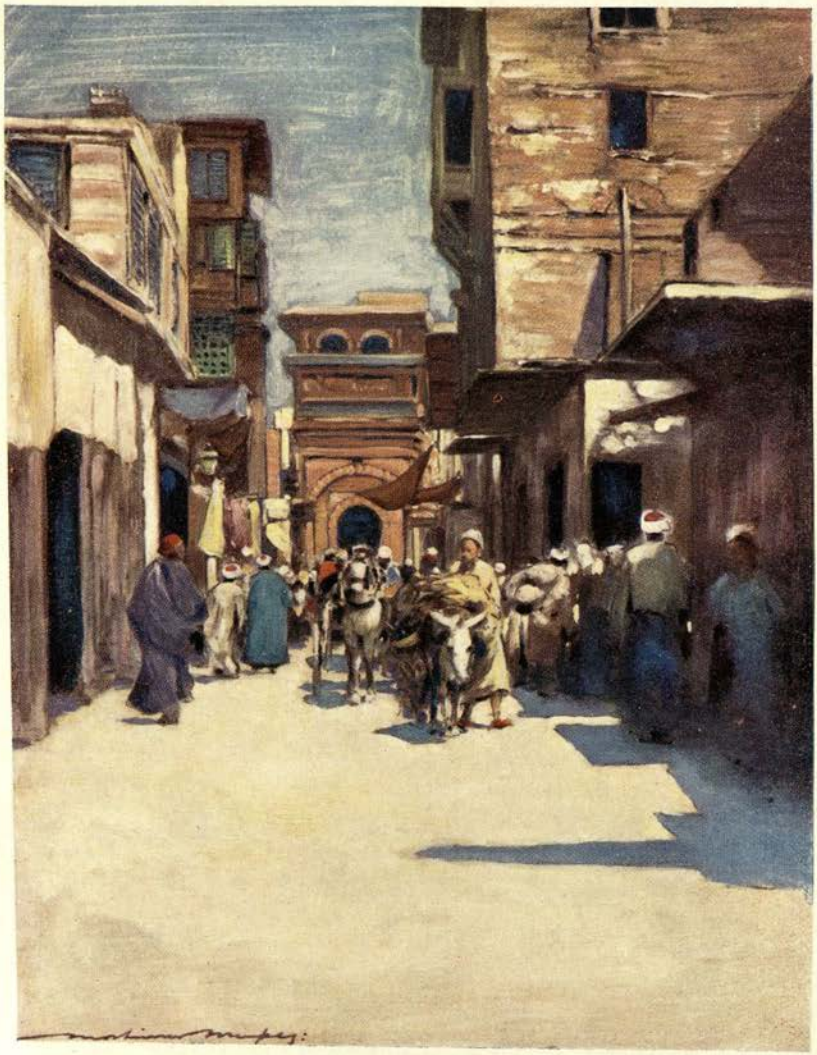
The imagination lingers there as much as on any place on earth. There is a well on the road to Bethlehem where David spilled upon the ground the water that three armed men brought him, rather than drink the price of blood. A pretty tradition tells how at this very same well, one of the wise men, having lost sight of the guiding star, stopped to give his horse drink, and as he did so, caught

sight of its silver reflection glistening in the water, and set out on the right road to Bethlehem once more.

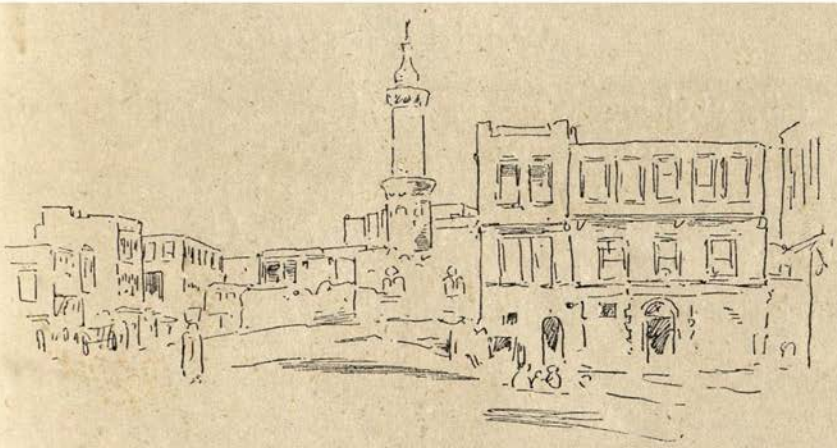
The church of the Nativity looks more like an old mediæval fort than anything else. The door is so low that every one, whether Christian or heathen, is forced to make an obeisance, or else be hit on the head. I saw that the place glistened with jewels, but that is about all, for I was almost torn to pieces directly I entered by guides, drivers, and salesmen, each one shouting in a shrill, high-pitched voice

that he wanted to take me down to see the manger where Christ was born. In the end I refused to go, so disgusted was I with the haranguing, swarming, noisome pack of people. How can one think in such a place as this! And so it is wherever you go in Palestine. The more holy and sacred the spot, the more revolting and noisy are the crowding beggars and pedlars. Hallowed Bethlehem is not by any means all that one could desire.

EGYPT



CAIRO, EGYPT



EGYPT

When I say that it was through a Sphinx at the British Museum that I decided on visiting Egypt, I may be accused of joking; but the statement is literally true. It came about in this way. I was at a big dinner-party and felt, as one is apt to do at the end of a London season, the cynicism, the affectation, the insincerity of it all, and the absence of disinterested motives, with decency almost hidden. The feeling impressed me so strongly that I could not shake it off the next day. So I strolled into the British Museum, and looking listlessly about came upon a small carved head of a Sphinx, which attracted me strongly. The more I studied it — and I sat there for some hours — the more I felt how clean and simple it was. It seemed to inspire a longing to go back to a simpler civilisation of thousands of years ago. Now, as the travellers agree, the life of people in Egypt to-day is practi-

cally unchanged, and then and there I made up my mind to go to Egypt.

My motive may possibly have been to study its archæological past, but when I reached Cairo I found that the Egypt of to-day was overmastering in its interest. There the old Bible history seemed alive again

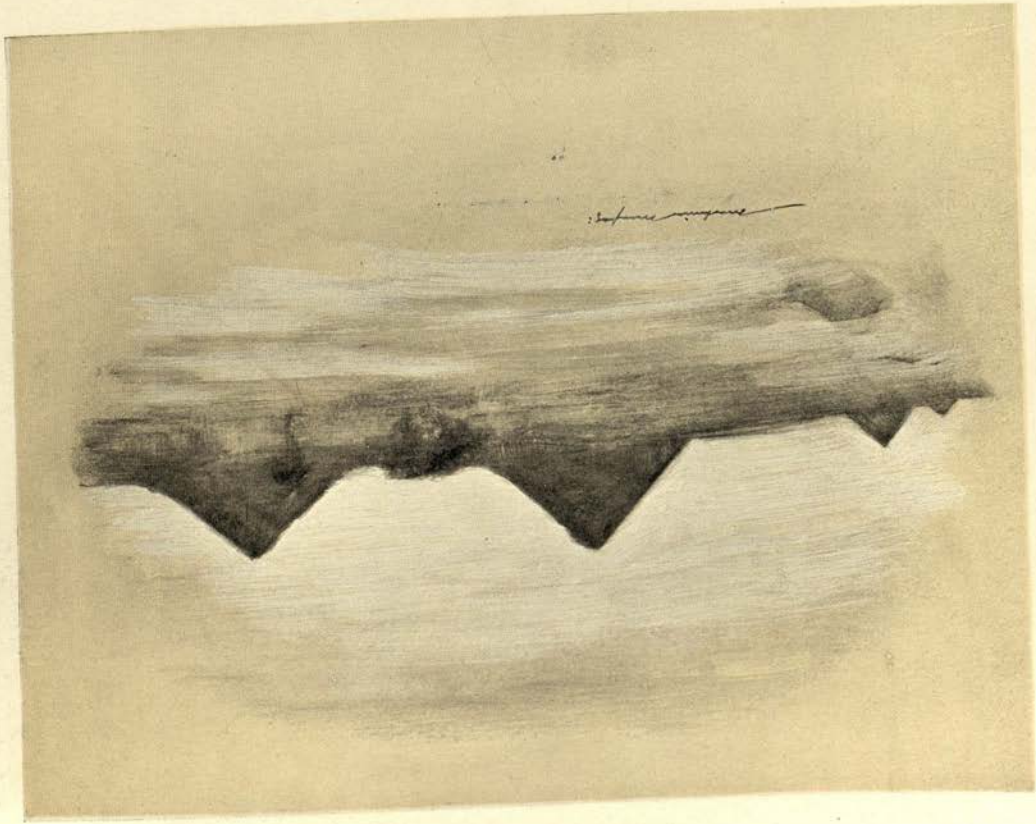
before my eyes. Yet it was not so much its picturesque incident as its colour that fascinated me, not so much the Egypt of history, but modern Egypt, with its bazaar and home-life in all its vividness and full rich colouring. Every bazaar, every little shop, was in itself a picture full of dazzling colour, almost like a flower, the strongest and most brilliant colours in juxtaposition, yet all in complete harmony. In Japan, in Burma, in the Spain of the Moors, I found nothing so rich in tone as in Cairo. There was an orange shop that I remember especially, a

yellow wall with a hole in it. Dilapidated woodwork of a purple hue surrounded that hole, and in its depths the eye gradually discovered its picturesque wares set out for sale. A beggar — an old man in a lemon-coloured gown, picked out in black — stood close to the wall. The rich mixture of

orange and purple and lemon-yellow can hardly be described. There are many people who might imagine that such colours could not go well together: they have n't seen that street. No doubt it is the brilliant sunshine that acts as a universal harmoniser in bringing all these vivid colours together. Many people may tell me that I exaggerated the colouring of Cairo, and, if so, their criticism will make me proud. For at the time I was working there, — in the shade, of course, — the brightest pigments on

my palette appeared dull and mud-coloured by the side of Nature in sunlight. A cheap way out of the difficulty was to use white as a harmoniser — that is, by making the colours greyer, and nearer each other — but for me the reign of white was over. To get a vivid green with even a taint of white is quite impossible. The hopelessness of trying to paint with a mixed palette where one has to fish for the right tone oppressed me. To paint a clean picture of a clear, sunlit scene, one must have a clean palette. It is n't easy to make my meaning understood — but Egypt revolutionised my ideas of work. Then, I despaired of distantly approaching the brightness of Egypt; now, if I am accused of exaggerating it, it will give me pleasure.

There is no living art in Egypt, but a dead art lives unconsciously. The people are biblical and dignified in appearance and devoid of vulgar curiosity; at least they appeared so to me. The old men were very handsome, and had wonderfully fine heads. They had rarely more than one eye, for the sun and the sand — chiefly the sand I fancy — affects the sight. Then the native doctors clap on

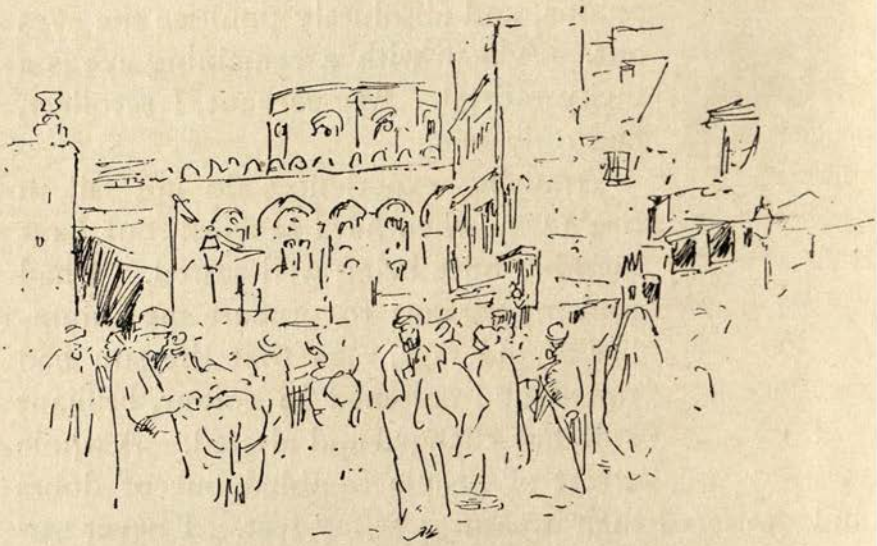


THE PYRAMIDS

onions, and absolutely poultice the eyes out. A man with a remaining eye is a lucky mortal. My servant, I recollect, had only one.

Amusing experiences do not fall in one's way when hard at work, but I remember once being well scared. I had told my servant to procure me a number of old rags, rags that the sun had tinted and softened in colour, brilliant still, but changed and altered. A whole street of people tumbled out of doors and showered their treasures at my feet. I never saw such a sight. But as the owners quarrelled over their bargains, my mute admiration was interrupted by a sudden reflection. The cholera! and at the thought of my danger in buying, I hurried out with a sickly horror impossible to describe, and fled. My servant insisted on completing his purchases, but I had lost interest somehow, as had the rags their dangerous value.

Grand Cairo, magnificent Cairo, where is her peer? The winding streets teem with people that have scarcely changed in appearance or in manners these hundreds of years. The same glorious Eastern life goes on before your eyes at the present day. Groups of natives in the most gorgeous robes stand by



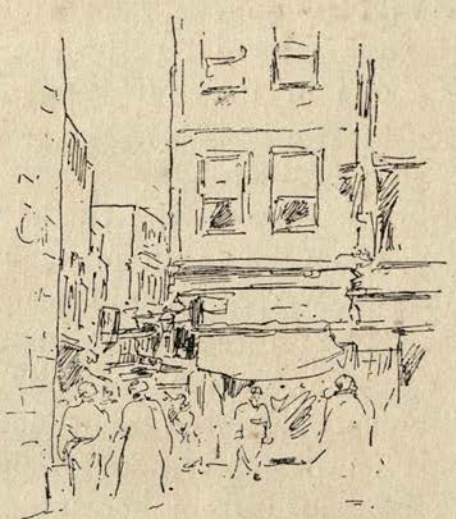
the doors of their houses, in a bazaar where nothing but carpets are sold, and so vast, so curious, so dark that it might have been built six or seven hundred years ago, or even before the Crusader, for all that one can tell. Every house is hung with magnificent tapestries and carpets. A shaft of sunlight streams through on to a rug of vermilion and emerald green, rich as the glories of the East, brilliant as the stones on the dress of a harem beauty. But the luminous shadows of the interior — profound and far-reaching, yet full of subdued light and colour — are no less striking than the humming-bird blues, the rubies and amethysts of the draperies in sunlight. One passes coffee-houses where Eastern story tellers are seated, surrounded by an admiring mob of men and children in multi-coloured Eastern robes, eagerly listening to wonderful, myste-

rious stories everywhere as interesting as Arabian Nights of the olden days; sweets-sellers with their impossible dainties; water-carriers with their ancient cry; baby donkeys and their good-natured drivers jostling one in the narrow streets.

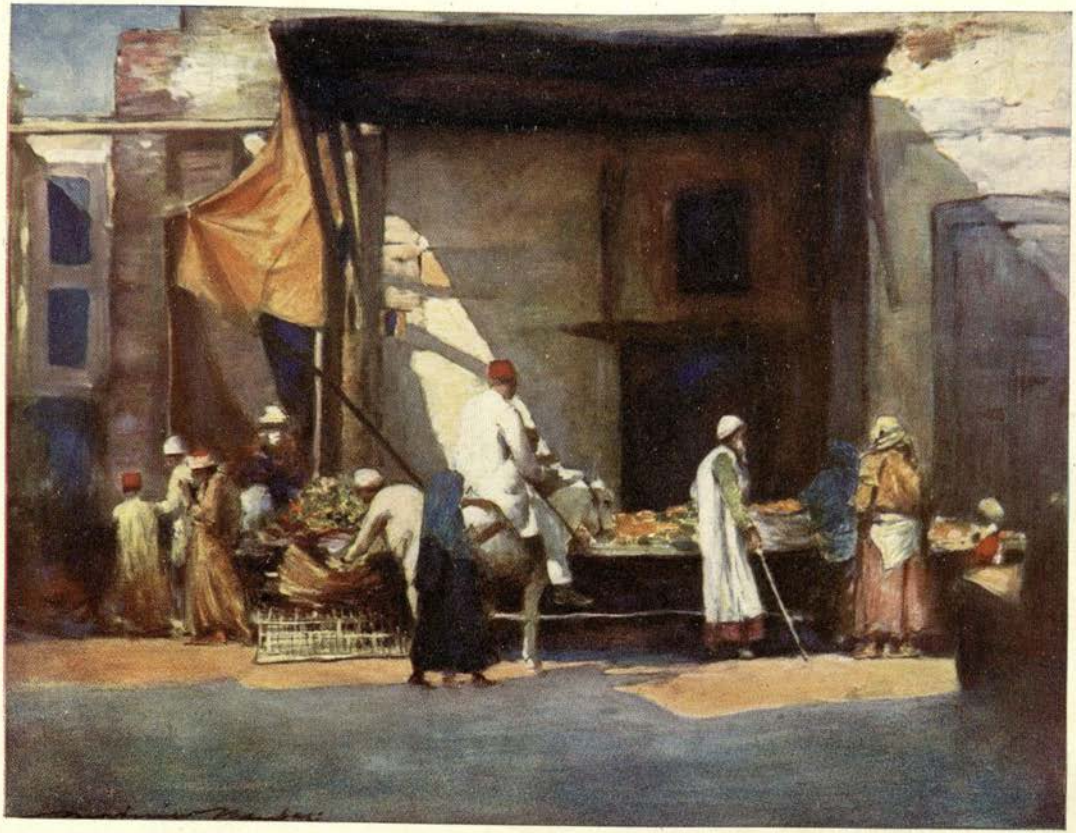
The finest view of Cairo is to be had from way up on the citadel towards the end of the day, when the wonderful mediæval city is spread beneath you, wrapt in a golden mist, with the long, unbroken line of the desert in the distance, purple and splendid, broken only by the misty pyramids. Suddenly there is a tremendous roar from the citadel. It is the sunset gun. Cairo seems but just to have awakened from her midday slumber; in the twinkling of an eye the streets are swarming with devotees on their way to prayers; children laughing, and camels screaming, while every little window of every house is transformed into a square of burnished gold. Just as suddenly the scene is changed once more. The sun sets behind the hills; there is a minute or so of the unearthly beauty of the after-glow, and darkness reigns almost im-

mediately, not to be relieved until the golden stars come out one by one, and form a glorious canopy overhead.

Cairo of late years has been built over to a very great extent, and portions of it do not differ in appear-



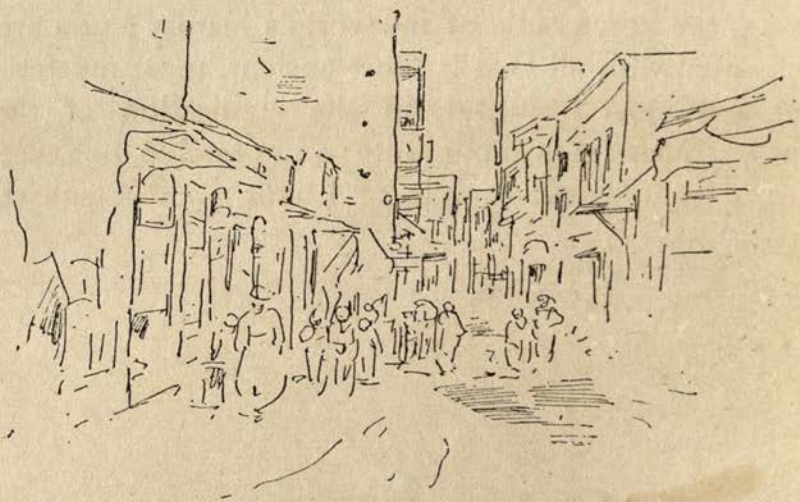
ance from any ordinary French or Italian town. This in some people's minds is considered an improvement, but to the artist, or to the scholar, or to the person who is really interested in the country for itself, it is decidedly a drawback. Now, Luxor and Karnac are absolutely different from Cairo in that they are not in the slightest degree modernised, except perhaps for the presence of one or two hotels. You pass slowly, and silently, and dreamily, up the beautiful river Nile until one evening, just about sunset, your Diahbeer anchors off the ancient temple of Luxor. Here you are in, as



FRUIT STALL, EGYPT

it were, the very cradle of the world's history; you are confronted with all that is most ancient, most mysterious, and most beautiful, in the civilisation of the world. There is nothing quite so impressive, not even Karnac itself, as the temple of Luxor seen at sunset.

But when you have been to the hotel, after witnessing the sunset in the temple of Luxor, and the moon has risen, and the stars are shining, and the absolute silence of the Egyptian night has fallen over the desert, you should take a trip — as most people do — to the magnificent ruins of Karnac. I think what will strike you most, with regard to Karnac, is its immense size. Somehow or other, travellers have never told us, and books of travel do not seem to have given us any information, as to the enormous size of Karnac. When



I was there, two or three years ago, there were upwards of three thousand men working every day at these wonderful ruins. I do not suppose there is a more magnificent sight in the whole world than the temple of Karnac by moonlight.

But we must not linger too long in these temples of Luxor and Karnac. One of the great things to do in this part of the world is to ride along the valley of Thebes from Luxor to the Tombs of the Kings. This in itself is an experience well worth undergoing. You pass between two splendid twin statues of Alexis the Great, which sit there looking for ever towards the sunrise, and then ride slowly along until the great crimson desert is reached. I use the word "crimson" advisedly, for there is nothing more startling, more extraordinary, or

more vivid, than the contrast between the green Nile valley of Thebes and the brilliant crimson of the desert into which you enter from a defile between these splendid red rocks. You ride along a little way until your guide stops you with the information that you have reached the Tombs of the Kings.

Into these tombs you descend by steps which take you sometimes as far as a hundred feet down into the ground; for Heaven alone knows how long these wonderful tombs may be. Here are paintings that were executed over six and seven thousand years ago, the colours of which are as bright and clear as though they had been painted yesterday. It was in one of these tombs that I saw the picture of a man carrying his chibouk over his shoulder, clearly proving that the Egyptians had been ac-

customed to the use of tobacco, and had smoked seven thousand years ago. There are several other tombs here to be seen, but one serves as a sample for the rest. Here you get glimpses of the life of the Egyptians; the social life, the literary life, the life of the hunter, and the life of the soldier, exactly as it was lived in those far-off days, and can read its history in the tombs — as indeed you can all over Egypt in the old temples — exactly as you read it in the Bible. Frequently you will find that the inscriptions on the tombs serve but as verifications of what you have been accustomed to read for years and years in your own Bible at home. You pass several temples on the way home, details concerning which it is unnecessary to give, since they are very much the same in every part of Egypt. There is one thing, however, that is, I think, noticeable everywhere, and that is the curious beautiful grey colour of these temples as contrasted with the brilliant red of the desert.

One never-to-be-forgotten day I came across the Sphinx. To me she is a woman no matter what name she bears. My best friend — the one dear and true friend which the world holds for me; the friend who lifted me out of the debasement into which I had fallen and revealed to me the reality and the power of Art. I have known Her in ages

A CAIRO STREET

past, perhaps on the banks of the mysterious Nile, perhaps in further ages still. I have loved Her, and I shall love Her again in the ages to come. On Her forehead is the serpent symbol of wisdom. She is of the Sphinx type which died before the Romans went to Egypt, — the type which belonged to a past when there were gods among men. She has the Sphinx conformation of brow and nostril, lip and chin, the majestic simplicity, the serenity, and the might; She has the Sphinx smile, sweet, strange, and inscrutable — that smile which, but for its unutterable sweetness and sympathy, would have in its scornful curve the cynical contempt of a race of gods for the inexpressible littleness of a race of men. The smile on that black face seems to tell of a sublime pity, too. She seems to say to me, "I have lived, I have loved, I have found Art, and I am Art — Art human and

divine, and for all time. I will give you comfort. I will give you knowledge. I will give you strength." The eyes look at me with wide pupils, and yet, when I peer close, there is no definition of pupil; the lips smile at me, — that all-meaning smile. And yet so simple are the curves of the mouth that it is as if a child had modelled them; so simple those grand restful eyebrows, that a child's finger might have laid them on; so strong and so simple the moulding of the nostril and of the chin, that it is scarcely possible to think of them as having been made by men. Here is breadth and simplicity in truth. How is it done? Where is the technique? There is none. Where is the art? We cannot tell. It baffles us, it is Art itself. We know only that this thing is, and that it is great.

Whenever I am lonely now, and dispirited, and soiled with the grime of modern London — its social and artistic vanities and pettinesses, its meannesses, its hypocrisies, and its sordid cringings, when the sense of hopelessness and degradation lies heavily upon me, I wander into the Egyptian Court of the British Museum. There I find a friend. It is only a little black woman's head, placed on a pedestal close by one of the windows; but once more I come away soothed, and strengthened, and cleansed.

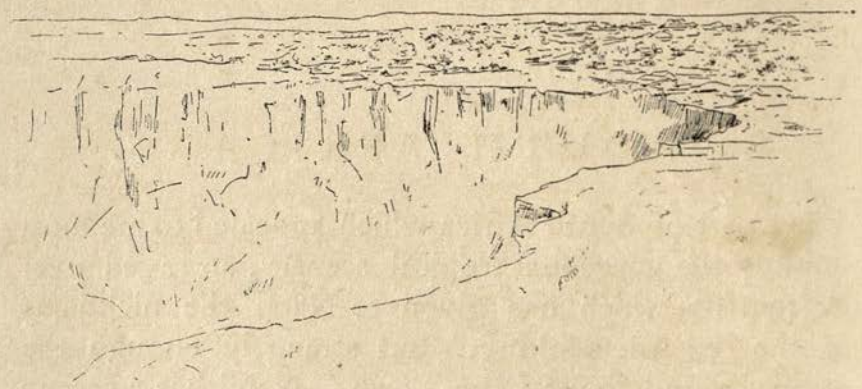
SOUTH AFRICA

NEAR KIMBERLEY, SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA

THAT part of South Africa which appealed to me most was not the gorgeous tropical scenery, so raved over by tourists, which has given to Natal the nickname of the "garden colony," but strangely enough the scenery round about Cape Town. Natal has a certain beauty, but it is a beauty that one can see anywhere; it has no distinctive character of its own. The trees and foliage there are vivid green, the glossy green of the magnolia, the palm, and the camellia mingle in a tangle of tropical vegetation. The country is luxurious almost to unhealthiness, that is to say, Nature seems to have got beyond herself, to be in a state of hysteria, she creates freaks, and bursts out in all sorts of unexpected places. For instance, you will often see a tree with its fruit or flowers growing from out of the stem. There is no reserve about it, and one would so much rather it had waited and come out quietly in the proper place.

If you want to picture to yourself the colouring of Natal look at a pineapple. There you have all the colours of its rich scenes combined in the one little fruit, — yellow, gold, orange, brown, and green. Hold up a pineapple out of doors, anywhere you may choose in Natal, and you will see the truth of this statement;



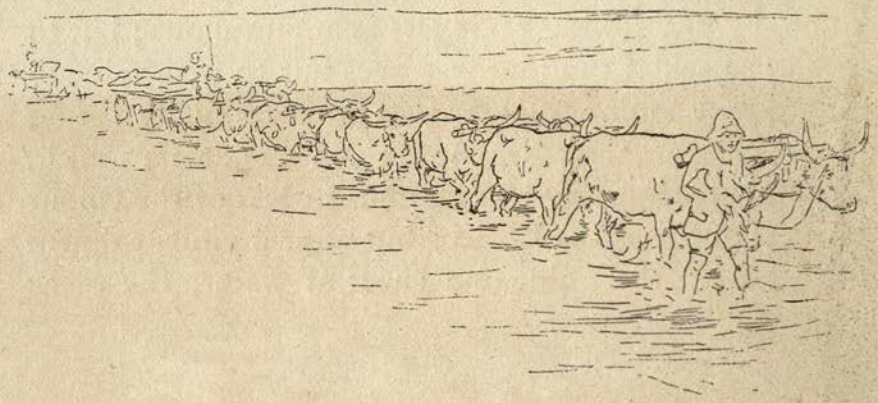
the fruit becomes so merged into the landscape as to be almost indistinguishable from it.

Most people rushing on their way to Natal and the Orange Free State, money-making or pleasure-seeking, never glance at Cape Town and its beautiful surroundings.

To me, that is the most fascinating part of South Africa. There is Sea Point, Wynberg, Rondebosch, Groote Schoor, Paarl, and a hundred lovely districts I could mention, each and every one with landscapes far more attractive in their sweeping breadth and cool silver colouring than any others to be found in the whole extent of South Africa. I have heard the scenery de-

scribed by unthinking strangers as monotonous; but to me this so-called monotony serves but to give value to the exquisite colour-changes that are continually taking place. At midday, when the sun was at its zenith, the landscape appeared to be more or less of the colour which is described as khaki; but after a violent downpour, leaving the veldt one sheet of water, the scene

changed from dull gold to a sweep of deep rich purple. The colours varied so continually at sunrise, at sunset, in shadow, and in sunshine, and with such extraordinary rapidity that within a single hour there were a dozen violent changes in effect. Yet there was invariably one point of similarity in these scenes, however marked the contrast: the colouring was always cool and silvery. Even the white of the little Dutch farms that seemed to form a part of the South African landscape had brilliant touches of cool spring green in the shutters, and the warm tones in the sky at sunset inclined rather to rose than vermilion, rather to violet than yellow.



The veldt never has been described and never will be described, because it is indescribable. It exercised a strange, subtle influence over me for which I could not account. It may have been its vastness, or its beauty, — I cannot tell; I only know that it took possession of me, that it filled me with a sensation of joy and greatness, that it made me feel a better man. In its vastness and grand simplicity it impressed me very much as did my first glimpse of the Sphinx; and this impression, after living for four months on the veldt, changed not but grew stronger.

Now that my journey is at an end, and I look back upon those months of campaigning, I cannot help thinking of how little men, who have not lived in the country, or have not seen the veldt, can realise the tremendous influence it exercises upon the people, and how utterly impossible it would be to attempt to pacify and govern the two Republics without a thorough knowledge of the conditions under which their inhabitants live. One cannot ignore the influence of the veldt, for it will not

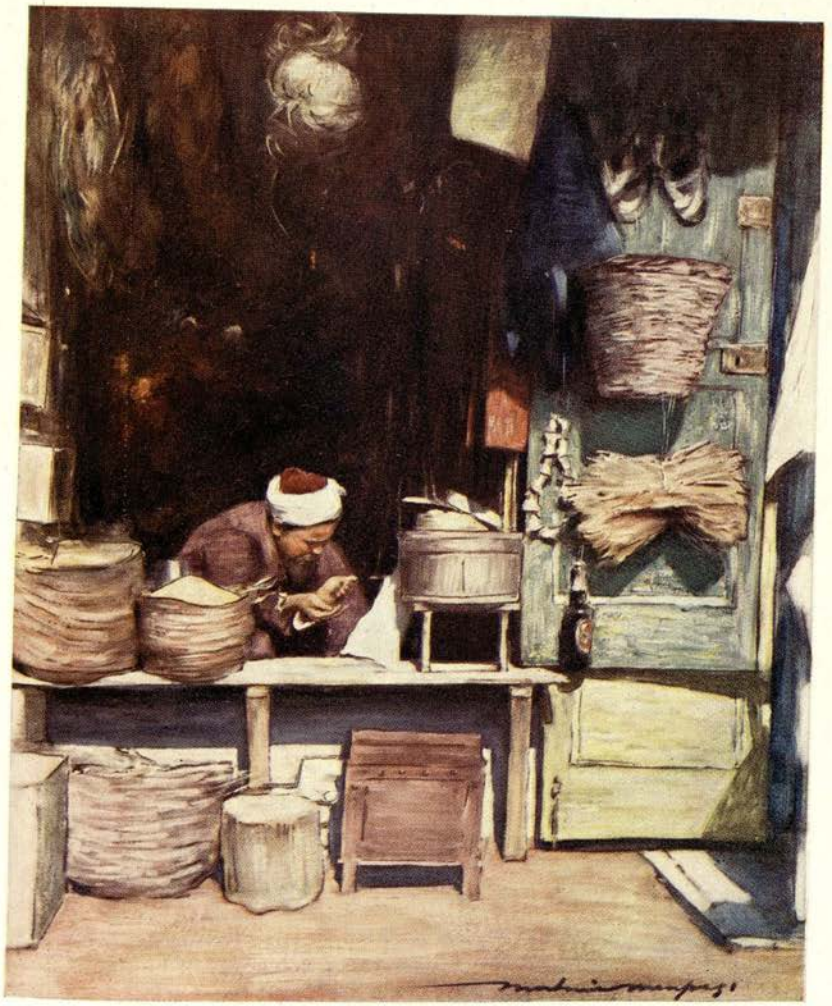
HILL COUNTRY NEAR BLOEMFONTEIN

be ignored. It draws men together, however antagonistic they may be, and whenever they may meet elsewhere the power of that association will still influence them.

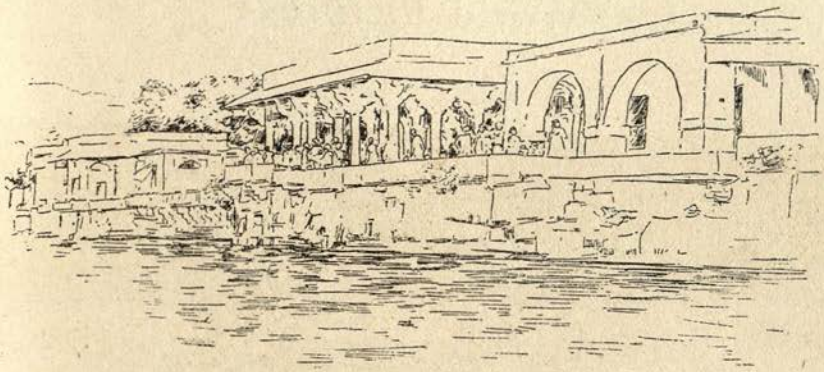
Yet at the same time one realises that the Boers, for whom it is the ideal home, are the only people in the world that could live permanently on the veldt; a European would find it dreary, desolate, and well-nigh intolerable.

INDIA

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

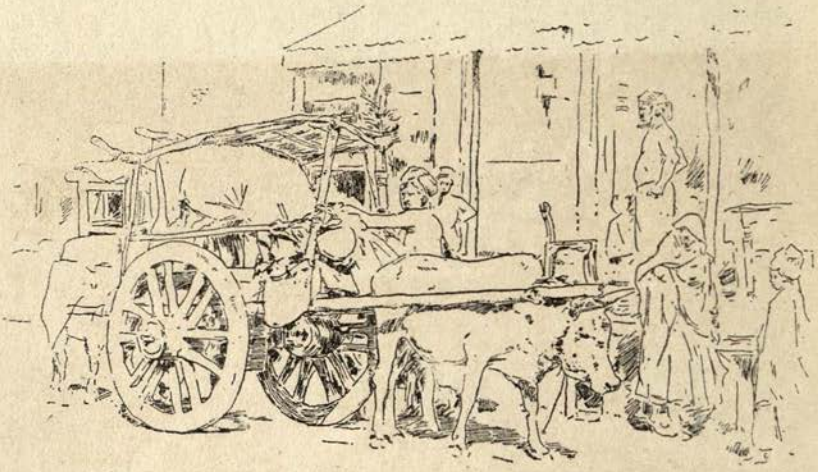


A SEED STALL, DELHI, INDIA



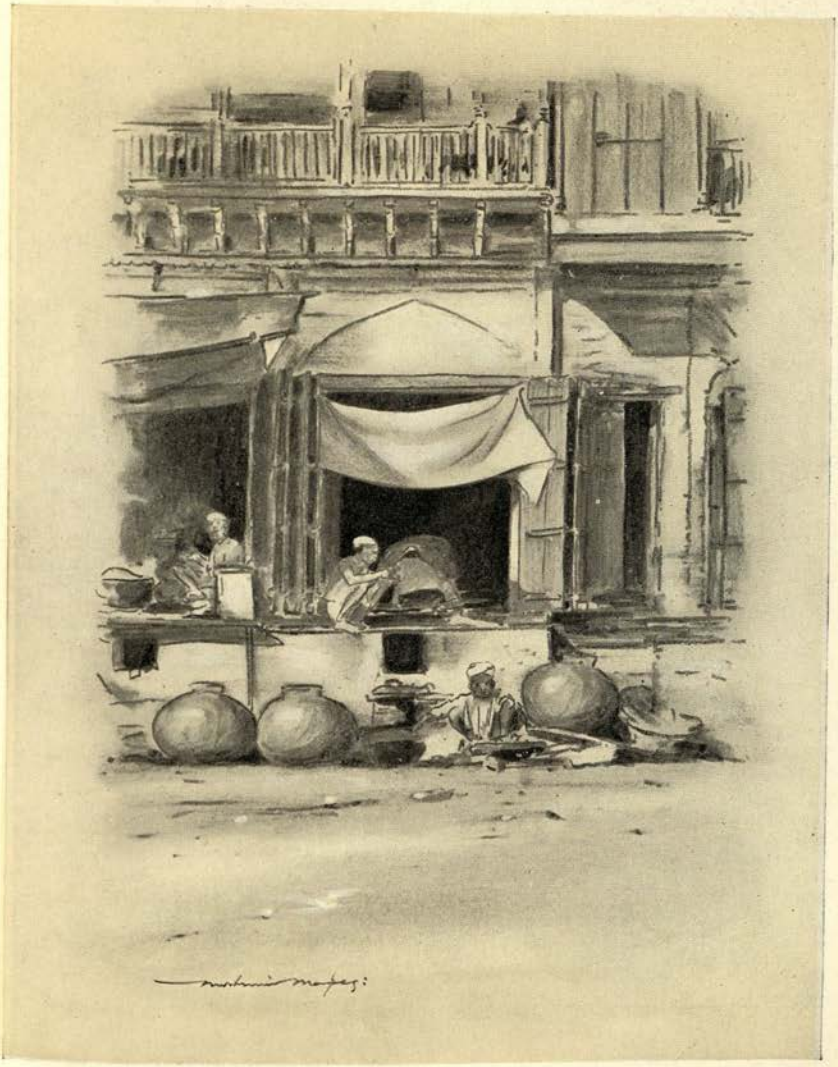
INDIA

My first impression of India was a very splendid one indeed. I found myself, when landing at Bombay, in the ancient portion of the town, surrounded by a wealth of colour, in an atmosphere of radiating light, freshness, and brilliancy. India surpassed my wildest expectations; the scenes I saw fired my brain, quickened my pulses, and filled my soul with a mad and eager longing to paint, paint, paint, now and at once. But alas! my colour box did not hold such pigment; the brightest colours in my tubes appeared but dull and faded, and would not nearly correspond to the glowing tones of earth and sky, houses and shops, and of the ever-changing multitudes that thronged and filled the streets and scenes about me. I wanted something purer, brighter, fresher; this was not a gold country or a blue country, but a country which demanded the full range of my palette. I used it, but only succeeded in creating mud, sombre and hopeless. Even my sheet of Whatman's paper seemed by comparison



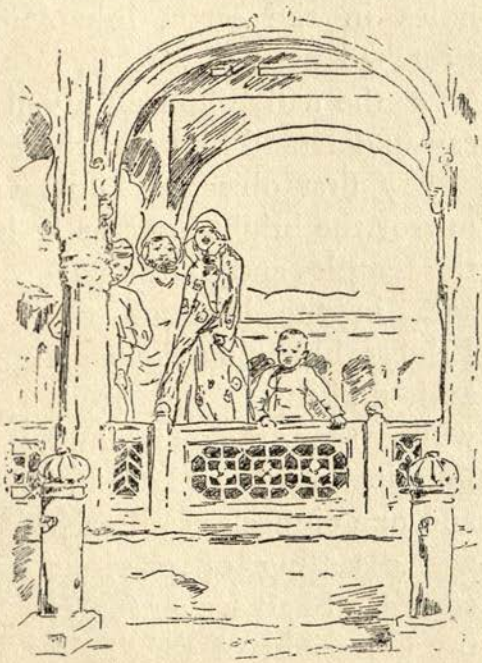
more true, and to match more nearly the sparkling clearness and brilliancy of the scenes. With discouragement and despair fast settling on my spirit I wandered about the city, drinking in with eager eyes the glories that were denied to my brush. Men and women of all races pushed and jostled me in the narrow thoroughfare; there were slender Bengalese, Pathans, Portuguese and Parsees, Malays and Mhugs, Chinamen, and here and there a British soldier or sailor, elbowing his way with characteristic national persistency. Carts and carriages of grotesque appearance, drawn by meek-eyed bullocks, gently pushed and forced themselves among us.

The houses on either side the road were of every kind of structure. Some were stately edifices, others mere huts; one and all were bright with reds and greens and golds, and rich with massive carvings.



BAZAAR AT DELHI

Shops could be seen everywhere, with their owners, grain sellers, idol sellers, money changers, sellers of sweetmeats, workers in silver and gold, squatting white-robed within them. The shop-fronts were decked with indescribable mosaics of gold-coloured matting and bamboo, each arranged in a different pattern, with endless variety of invention. The whole city seemed, as it were, a kaleidoscopic jumble of moving flower-beds, bright with endless varieties of colour, dazzling to the sight and changing with bewildering rapidity. How is it possible, I thought to myself, that gorgeous and varied colours such as these, gathered together in one small street, can be made to blend and harmonise? Is it that the natural taste of the people is more perfect than that of any other nation, in the East, or the West, or on the face of the globe? No, it is the sun that tones the colouring of India so greatly. Wherever one goes one cannot but feel its power as a harmoniser;—the costumes of the people by it are made beautiful; colours which in the rays of our pale



and flickering Western sun appear crude and vicious here are enveloped in its wondrous golden embrace and literally forced to harmonise.

India, unlike any country I had yet visited, unlike Japan or China, was a gorgeous country, a country that boasted fine architecture, magnificent temples and mosques of exquisite workmanship, teeming with full and sumptuous colour. Palaces met one on every side, side by side with hovels unfit for pigs, mere holes in the earth, inhabited by whole families of wretched natives, who live there all their lives long. Over the native himself a veil is drawn ; no European can understand him and therefore nothing can be said.

My first object in India was to catch sunlight, to mirror the bright light as it burned hour by hour on the temples and on the palaces in the land of the Princes, bleaching the walls and making them look whiter than they are, and illuminating the thousand and one pinnacles as if each was a setting of precious stones. Shall I ever forget my first sight of the Taj ?

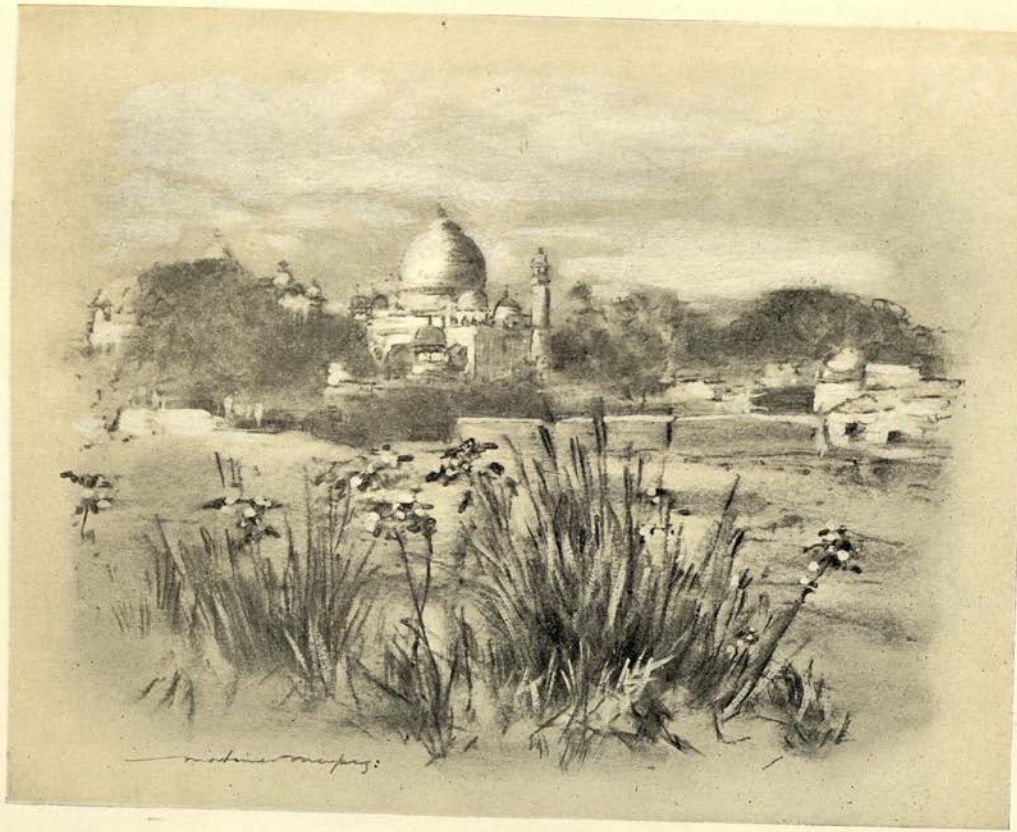
THE PORCELAIN DOME, AMRITSAR, INDIA

India

I was travelling in the railway train to Agra, and having the compartment to myself, was stretched at full length on the seat, sleeping and dreaming frantically. As I awoke I saw a bubble, a huge variegated bubble of a million dainty colours reflected in the window opposite to me. For a moment it seemed a part of my dreams, but glancing over my shoulder I saw the original, a most fine and elegant building, of faultless proportions, a triumph of architecture. It was of white marble, exquisitely sculptured and inlaid with colours and jewels, a thousand golden ornaments and minarets. The great dome swelled heavenwards and tapered to a point. It was all glittering and bathed in that warm orange light which only the setting sun sheds. It is impossible to describe the Taj, because there is nothing in the world like it, except perhaps

a bubble from which I think the architect must have taken his inspiration. Over and over again I have seen artists attempting to paint the temple, at all times of the day, in early dawn, at midday in a perfect blaze of sun when the sky shows a vivid blue and the temple a clear luminous white, at sunset, and in

twilight, and yet there has never been a picture painted in oil or in water-colours conveying the faintest idea of the Taj as I saw it. But my most vivid recollections and remembrances of India and those which are chiefly impressed upon my mind are not of the beautiful palaces nor the fortresses, not so much the memory of the Taj and its marvellous echo within, but, strangely enough, of the smell of the



THE TAJ AT AGRA

dry dust, a curious acrid smell — I have it in my nostrils still. It lingers not unpleasantly, for it wove itself into this ancient place, ancient yet so novel to me, and it brings back to me now all those first impressions and novel sensations which make a country dear to one.

On my first morning at Delhi I roamed idly about in a temple courtyard enjoying myself. The heat of India was above and around me; the clanging of hammers, silver bells, and ornaments sounded in my ears. Turning sharply round to look at a fruit-stall, I suddenly banged up against a great stone-coloured sacred bull, an odious character, a pompous, rampant, supercilious brute, straying about the streets, walking straight through the throng of the people and knocking them

down right and left like ninepins. They picked themselves up smilingly, and no doubt considered it a great privilege to be thus treated. Anyhow, they were all frightfully kind to the beast, feeding and petting it outrageously. When it came pounding along towards me I raised my stick and struck it a sounding thwack! Cries of indignation were raised on every side, even from the Mohammedans; and the Brahmin bull, who had never received such treatment before, was more indignant than anybody. So indignant, in fact, was he that I found it necessary to remove myself, as far and as quickly as possible, from his neighbourhood.

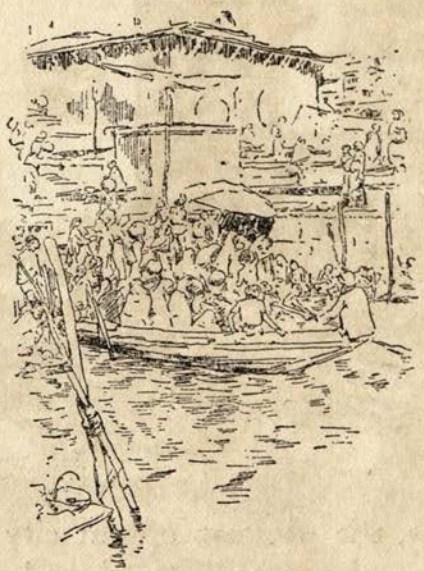
With an artistic prospect so boundless as the daily life of the

THE GOLDEN TEMPLE, AMRITSAR, INDIA.

people, their picturesque costumes, street, river, and holiday scenes in Peshawur, Lahore, Delhi, Amritsar, Jeypore, Ajmere, on the Shelum, the Ganges, and the Irrawaddy, it would be strange indeed if an artist could not find abundant scope for his efforts.

But Benares, the greatest opium city of the world, is in my opinion the most decorative place in all India. It is an abounding delight to the artist and altogether indescribable. I spent three days in a boat on the river watching the panorama on the shore, and making a hundred sketches, of which only two or three were at all satisfactory. It would take a lifetime to paint the place as it deserves; one is choked with material. It is quite hopeless to paint on ordinary oil-coated panels. The only way to approach the atmospheric brilliancy is to paint on a ground of pure

Chinese white, and even then the result is disappointing. Nothing in the world resembles the colour of Benares; no pigment can reproduce it. The chief element is its tremendous brilliancy. Thousands upon thousands of small boats float on the holy river, and as many people, all sick and dying Hindoos, bathe from

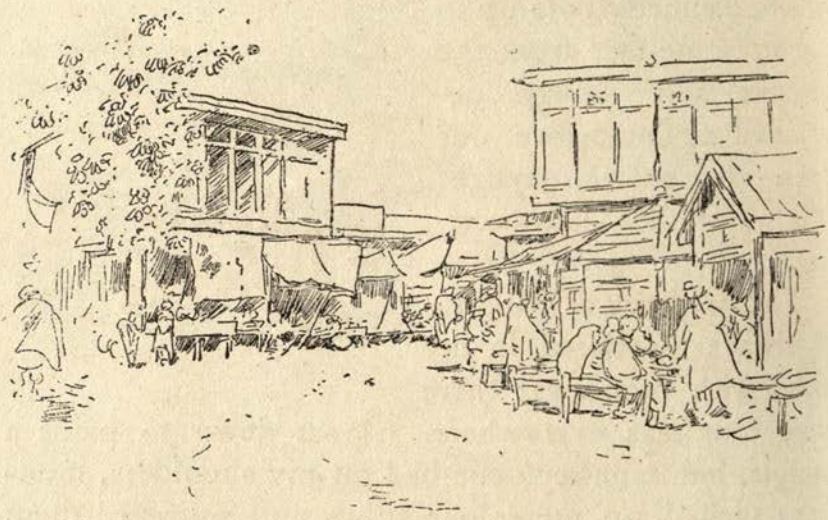


its tawny banks in multi-coloured raiment, bright beyond description. The houses of the town are pinkish white in colour. Little ramshackle jetties, loaded with people, some of whom are seated and others praying, jut out on to the river; both river and shore are one seething mass of humanity. It was at Benares that I was taken to see a little old woman living in a dug-out cave, a holy woman who, by strong hypnotic power or by a simple juggler's trick, I know not

MOSLEM WOMEN

which, distinctly rose up in the air some feet from the ground and slowly descended again before our eyes. In broad daylight this was rather disconcerting.

The holy city of Mootra is always associated in my mind with monkeys; there were monkeys everywhere. I sat down to paint a temple, but monkeys climbed on my shoulders, monkeys picked up my colour tubes and squeezed them dry, monkeys peered mockingly into my face, plucked out my hairs one by one, and gloated and gibbered over them. Yet I dared not touch them, for these little demons were supposed to be holy; rather was I exceedingly polite to them, almost deferential, in fact, in my manner. A friend of mine, an artist, once went to Mootra; but he has never been since, for he is a marked man there. He was captivated by a baby monkey, a charming little creature, and so he tucked it under his arm one day and made off with it. He had not taken two steps before the hue and cry was raised all over monkeydom, and instantly thousands of monkeys swarmed upon every roof and doorway and rushed pellmell upon the



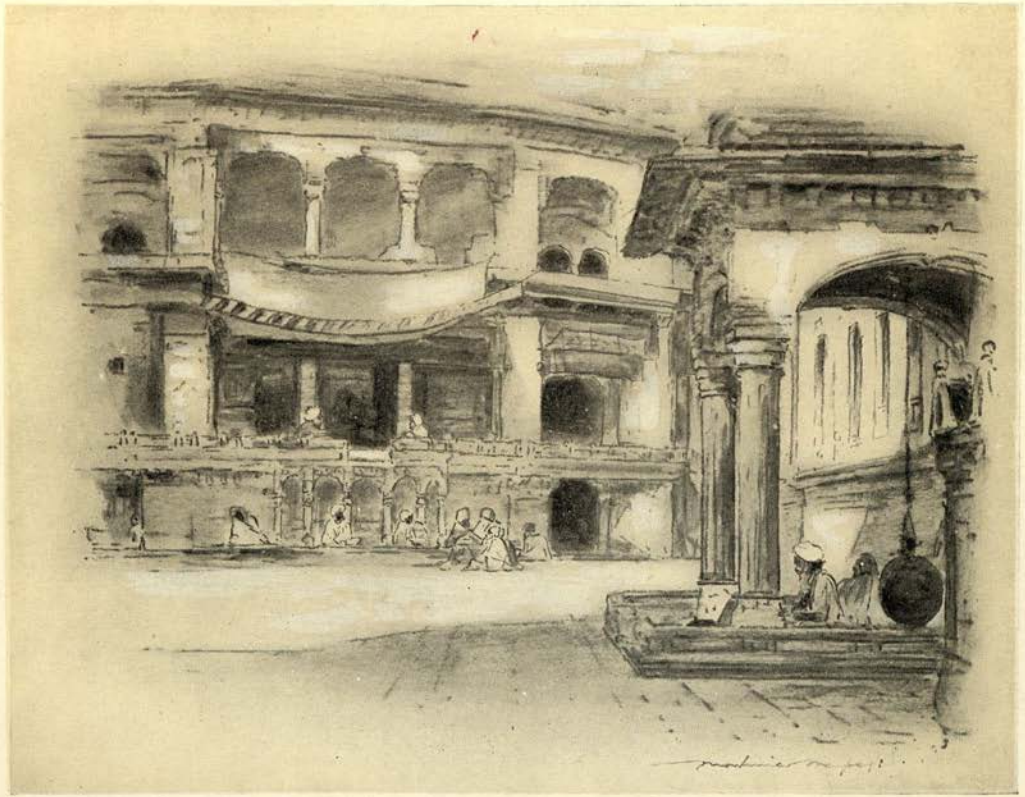
unfortunate man. They chased him over walls, in and out of ditches, ferreted him out from hiding places, until, panting and exhausted, he arrived at his hotel with all the monkeys of Mootra at his heels, rampant, and demanding their brother. The monkey was instantly given up, but the transgression was never forgotten or forgiven. That man, on pain of death, was not able to show his face outside the hotel door, and he was forced rapidly and ignominiously to depart from Mootra under cover of night. He has never been there since, for fear of recognition, so keen and retentive is a monkey's memory reputed to be. It was at Mootra that I saw one of the

JEYPORE, INDIA

most extraordinary and interesting sights possible — a contest of knavery between a crow, the most artful bird extant, and a holy monkey. A monkey sat on a wall with his head on one side, apparently wrapped in deep slumber; a plate of food stood before him. A crow approached from some few yards off, hopping cautiously backwards and forwards and from side to side. Its small, beady eyes glanced swiftly now and again at the sleeping monkey, and between times took in the landscape with several sharp surveys. Approaching close to the dish, but still keeping a cautious lookout, it made one frantic grab at the meat, as swift as lightning; but the monkey, who must

have had a slit open somewhere, was quicker still, pounced down from the wall, and collared that crow. And then a most awful scene ensued. The monkey, who, by the by, was the most wide-awake animal I

have ever come across, certainly chuckled with diabolical glee, as he climbed back to his perch, and, sitting on one leg of the crow, he pulled the other wide apart, and began deliberately and slowly to pluck out the feathers one by one. And so I left the pious monkey having a perfectly glorious time. This is certainly not the type of person to be trifled with,—hence my gentleness and forbearance.

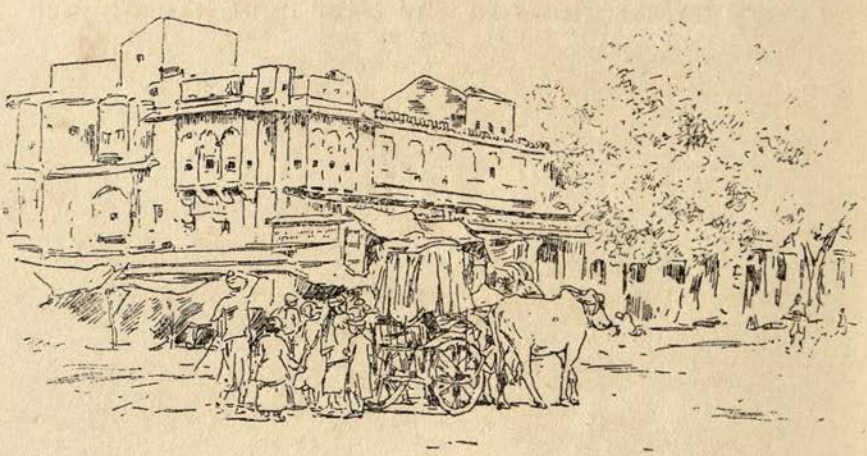


TOWN OF AMRITSAR

At Jeypore I began to work very hard and in earnest, for the place fascinated me. It reminded me of nothing so much as Dickens's description of his house in the south of France — "the pink jail." Jeypore is a collection of pink jails: all the houses are painted pink, and some have latticed and barred windows. Colour, air, and sunshine are alike lovely, and every bazaar glows in the clear light like a bunch

of orchids. The costumes are beyond description for variety and beauty of colour. In the afternoon when the sun is losing power, everybody turns out to a kind of celestial Rag Fair. Jeypore is beautiful because it was treated as a city should be treated. It was made a pink city in one day, when the authorities distempered the whole place, before the visit of the Prince of Wales to India many years ago. This pink city at night when the sun sets takes an old

rose-red tone, faint heliotropes appear, then bluey tints and purple, whilst three deep rose tones are reflected in the sky in a higher key. Of all my impressions of India perhaps this one is the most vivid, the rose-red city towards evening with the glowing white robes of the people, which created a harmony of old rose and silver unequalled by anything I have

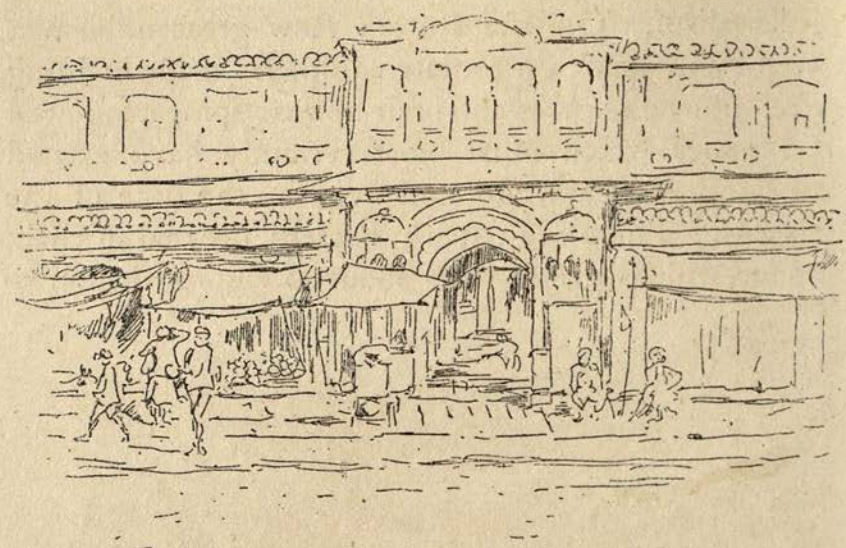


ever seen. If one takes up a stand at a street corner some most extraordinary and startling outfits are to be seen in Jeypore in the way of carts. A camel attached to a carriage will pass by, then a couple of oxen drawing a cart that must certainly have been designed in the days before the flood. There are also leopards and lions pulling small chariots for all the world like a circus, but the whole is most picturesque in effect.

In Hyderabad, that most gorgeous and sumptuous of cities, there is noticeable everywhere a strange mingling of the modernity of life with absolute

mediævalism. On the Rotten Row great noblemen sweep by in smart up-to-date equipages made in Long Acre, with fine horses and bran-new trappings, followed by retinues which must most certainly have existed five hundred years ago, and even in the time of the Saracens. There are superb Parsees dressed in chain armour, whirling their rifles about so vigorously and so

ferociously that one is quite terrified as they pass. As I swung in a graceful rocking movement through the streets, holding a superior view of the city from my elevated position on the back of a monstrous elephant, I seemed, almost in a moment, to be transported back to the days of the old "Arabian Nights" of long ago. Being the only European in the city that afternoon, — for the natives were rather fanatical just then, and one generally requires a small escort, — I enjoyed myself thoroughly, despite the fact that I had spent one long weary morning learning to climb on to my dignified



mount, and was spending as much time now in endevouring to keep on it.

I found myself in a place that has been very rightly described as the hot-bed of intrigue. Scandal, malice, and mystery lurked behind every lattice. As I passed houses luscious with colours of yellow and orange, I could almost hear the whisperings of the women and the stealthy rustling of their silken garments. One learns from the rhapsodies of Hindoo writers that the ladies of India are exceedingly beautiful — that they have locks as black as the clouds of June, and brows as bright as the autumn moon. By European writers, also, much has been said of their costume and of their beauty, but I never saw an Indian lady, except on rare occasions when one of their little gilded cars chanced to pass me by; regular little moving temples

NAUTCH GIRLS, INDIA

they are, gorgeous with carvings and bright colours, when I caught a swift glance of a fair female face peeping out. One sees many women about the streets sitting before their houses or carrying burdens; in fact, the country swarms with them, but the great ladies are secluded. At the village wells, which have been very truly described in the Bible as being the centre of life, women are to be seen in great abundance, dressed in bright purples and reds, chatting and laughing gaily with the men, as they draw their daily portion of water. The wells are particularly remarkable in Hyderabad, whence, by the way, I seem to have wandered.

On the outskirts of the city, as I and Jumbo were wending our way homeward that memorable afternoon, we came across a small Indian boy, who, as we passed, began to laugh mischievously and to beat upon an empty biscuit tin which bore the name of Messrs. Huntly and Palmer. We passed in dignified silence, taking not the slightest notice of the noise; but unfortunately for us, a buzzing nest of bees close by noticed it very particularly, and evidently taking it into their stupid heads that the elephant and I had beaten the tin expressly to annoy

them, they came swarming after us in one huge wave. Certain death stared us in the face when, contrary to my expectations, Jumbo heroically rose to the situation, put on his smartest pace, and literally sprinted along the edge of the cliff. I clung to his neck, as his huge bulk swayed backwards and forwards over a

yawning precipice certainly not less than eight hundred feet in depth. However, we left the enemy behind us and returned home in safety. That was a disgusting experience, and frightened me even more than the episode of the leopard who sneezed on me, although that, too, was by no means a pleasant sensation. I was coming home from dinner late one moonlight night, accompanied by my servant, when from a hedge close by I heard a heavy depressed sigh, followed by a huge sneeze which sprinkled me all over. I looked up and saw a leopard with great green eyes smiling contentedly with relief at his convulsion. "Leopard

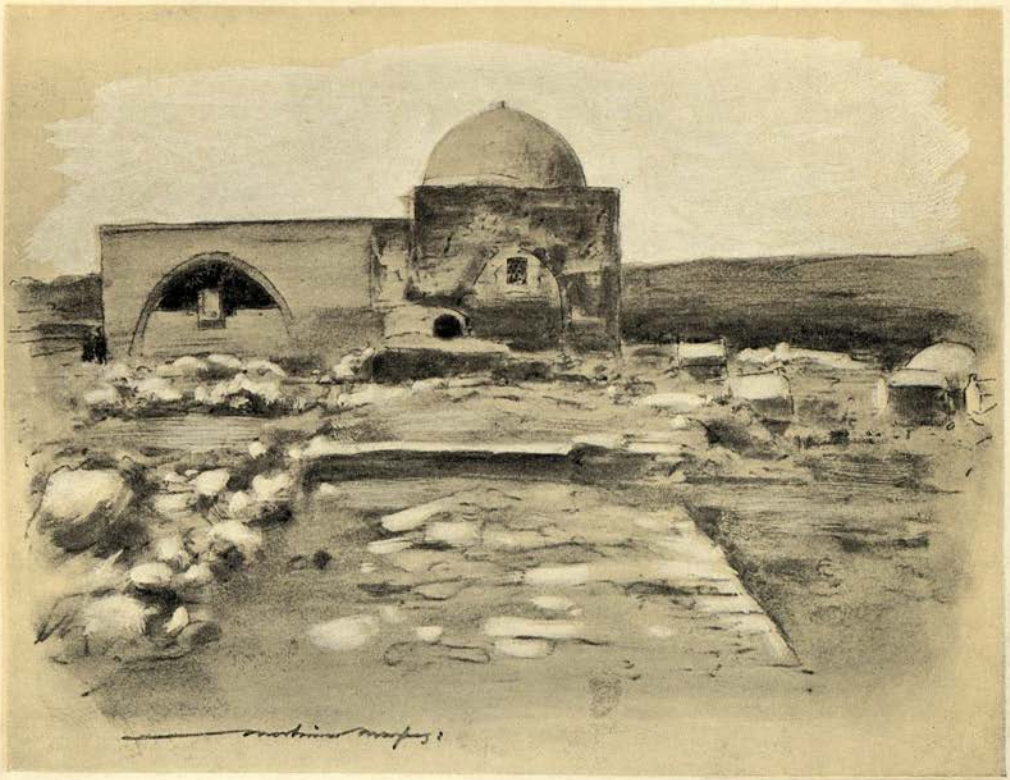
coughing," said my servant. "Master running," said I; and suited the action to the word.

In Hyderabad, I stayed with some delightful people who were just then in the throes of that not unmixed joy, house-decorating. The wife, who was by way of being artistic, persuaded me to help her with one of the rooms, the dining-room I think it was. I accepted,

partly out of affection for them, and partly because I was curious to see something of the Indian artisan. The experience damped any preconceived ideas I may have entertained of building a house in India. There were twenty-five painters in the one room, besides innumerable servants. A week was occupied in procuring size to mix with the distemper for the walls; brushes were not to be got at all. The men had not the faintest idea of technique or how to handle paint, and they dabbed it on the walls by aid of small, hard bits of cotton-wool rolled into tiny balls. Nevertheless, they showed a certain appreciation of colour and a facility in

matching tones, such as the ablest of our skilled British workmen could not equal. I met in this same house one of the clergymen attached to a most scholarly and learned mission from Cambridge, who had come out to India to try to convert the high-class Brahmins and Mohammedans, men who possess the most cultivated and subtle intellects in the world. I was anxious to know how the mission was progressing, and that gave rise to a rather vulgar question. I asked him how many converts he had made in the previous year. "One, and not sure of him either," he frankly replied. This total seemed rather discouraging as the result of a whole year's hard work by a dozen or so of England's finest scholars, but the clergyman assured me that it was better to win over one man than to net them in sackfuls, as a minister, whose sect shall be nameless, once did — twenty-five thousand joyous, happy converts in the course of a few short months.

The temples of India are perfect paradises for the etcher: he finds such marvellous lattice work; such domes — some of copper richly gilt, others of blue porcelain, and green and gold enamel; such lofty sculptured arches; and marble minarets of exquisite beauty and proportion, with colours like an angel's dream.



DELHI

India

The golden temple of Amritsar, a solid golden temple blazing in the afternoon sun, with a perfect counterpart of its magnificent self reflected in the smooth waters of the river beneath, is perhaps the most beautiful of all. If you wish to be reminded of the grand monuments which many of the great of India raised to the memories of their consorts, you have simply to turn your eyes to Oodeen's Tomb where the faithful are seen on the verandah standing in dreamy attitudes, for it is their custom to assemble here to wish, and to dream, and to build castles in the air, under rich-coloured rugs of Persia, which serve as blinds when the sun makes it too hot to gaze out on the open courtyard. No one but Mr. Rudyard Kipling has shown us the true India; the Moslem lounging in the little blind house on the city wall, the Hindoo of Hindooism in the bazaar and the temple, and the Hindoo of English service, lurking about the compound of the Sahib. By his work alone we are enabled to see the blaze of Oriental colour, through the sobering gaze of a northern temperament. He has shown us Indian children, Indian night, and Indian winter; he has convinced us of the India of byways, suburbs, country roads, daily labour, and "universal sun;" he has given us scenes that reveal the full, common, but alien vitality of the race and the place.

CASHMERE

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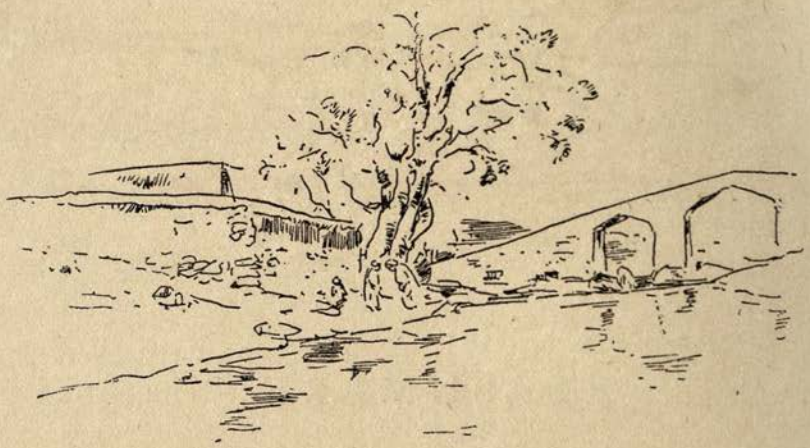
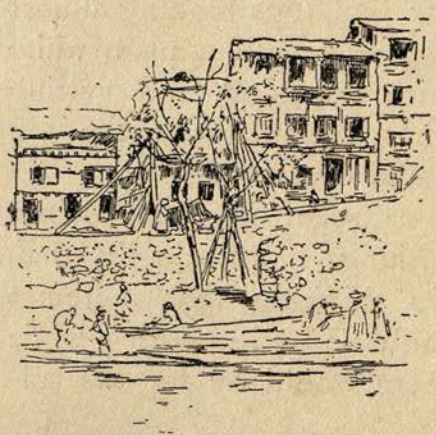
CASHMERE

CASHMERE is a perfect etcher's paradise, full of small and graceful form. It is the quaintest place imaginable, for the houses look as if they had been sitting up all night, or as if they had been engaged in a sort of diabolical dance, and had been struck stationary in the midst of it, for no two of them are at the same angle. Syrinagar is perhaps the ideal city for the etcher and master of line ; there are bridges composed of myriads of blocks of wood, irregular buildings looking almost like lacework of wood, beginning with a plain white wall, probably dazzling with sunshine, and getting richer and richer, until they culminate at the top in a perfect blaze of detail and masses of flowers. In fact, these Cashmere houses seem in their dainty structure to resemble nothing more closely than flowers. One cannot help thinking that if James MacNeill Whistler could only be let loose for a while in Cashmere, what joys there would be for the collector and art lover.



I myself lived for some months in a boat on the Jhelum, and this is, without doubt, the dreamiest and most beautiful life imaginable. One drifts lazily down a golden river, bound in with hills of blue, and lying beneath a pale green sky. At sundown the water changes to a bluish grey, and how well the grey sky, mixed with opal tints, with a crimson dash of the setting sun, is reflected on its calm surface, while the banks and the groves of wood behind are bathed in a mystic atmosphere of greenish mist! At noon, numerous figures in coloured dresses are to be seen seated on rafts, and on steps, under big um-



AT SRINIGAR, CASHMERE

brellas, trying to catch a breath of the air, as it now and then wafts itself in warm gusts across the river; and a Cashmere family of small brown babies, clad in red and blue, at play on the edge of the river, is a charming subject for a picture. Many bold and rich effects can be obtained by painting an Eastern city at the hottest hour; there is the dull green river, with brown steps leading to it, perhaps a white archway, with delicate foliage of tender green, and a clear blue sky, and all these details gain tone from the dark shadow within the archway. It sounds crude on paper, and many an artist would make it so on canvas; to be successful one must be able to triumph over the difficulties of blending strong colour in a strong light.

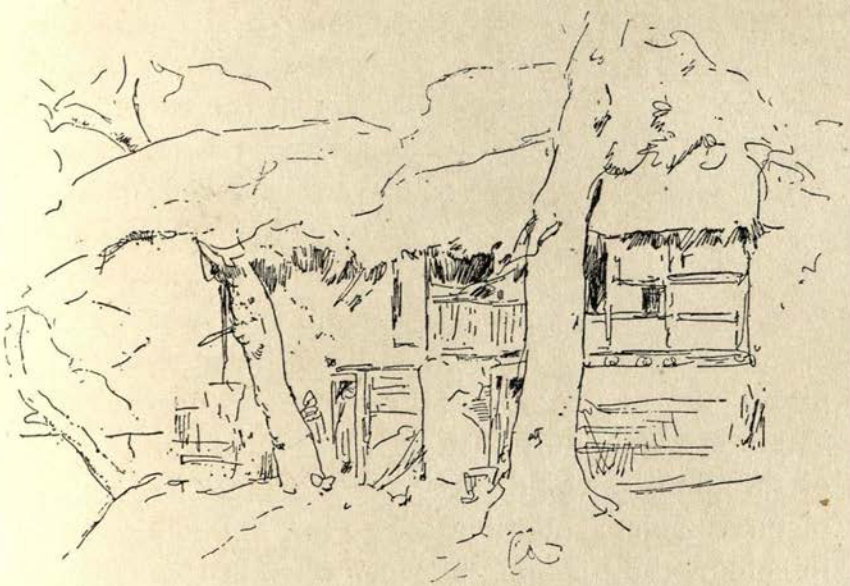
Everybody is prepared to find picturesqueness

in Japan, while, on the other hand, almost all the artists and writers, with the exception of one or two, who have painted or treated Indian subjects since India became British, have left an ineffaceable impression of dulness on the mind. The dulness must have been in the artist or in the critic; it most certainly is not in the ancient cities, with their streets, temples, and natives, which are mines of picturesque beauty, boundless fields for the work of the artist. Until quite lately, India was as much given over to ready-made art and gaudy convention as the Italy of half a century ago, when all the women wore laced bodices and "tovaglie," all the men Tyro-

SAPOOR, CASHMERE

lean hats, and all the landscapes had balustrade foregrounds. The East is not the East save in her own light. The sun is the centre and the ruler of her life, and art has not been trained to serve the sun.

Unfortunately, a short tour in India seems to pro-



vide a man with sufficient material for dull studio pictures painted at leisure in Bohemia to last him his lifetime. He puts in plenty of hot coppery colour, cobalt skies, hard blue shadows, and burning midday light; but the more violent and metallic the colour, the less the illumination, and his big canvases, outdoing one another in strong yellow and indomitable blue, never show a touch of the luminosity of even a London sky.

I have seen India in every possible aspect, its

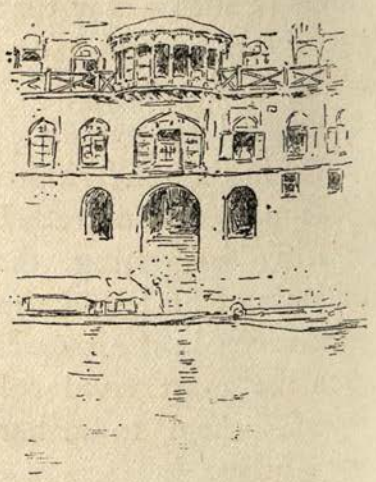
churches and houses, its streets with native shops and workers in brass and metal, its sacred rivers with their house-boats and pilgrims ; and my opinion is, that the æsthetic and artistic possibilities, in various forms, that are to be found in our great Indian Empire — that empire of which every Englishman is so justly proud, and of which most Englishmen know so little — are not to be surpassed in any country on the face of the globe. If a depreciator of India's charms and picturesqueness could but see a pink homestead, sweet in colour, abutting on the river wherein it is reflected in opalescent shadows, or catch a glimpse of Cashmere through its pearly haze, with the women seated, like queens of merchandise, at the street corners or in the bazaars vending their goods, the men, when labour is done, sitting at the door of an inn in grey bernouses enjoying their pipes and coffee, or a belle of Cashmere with a gorgeous veil all wrought in gold and her ears richly bedizened with the wonderful gold work of Jeypore, — surely he, too, would succumb to her charms and frankly admit that the great Indian Empire is the home of loveliness and beauty.

RIVER DWELLING AT SRINAGAR

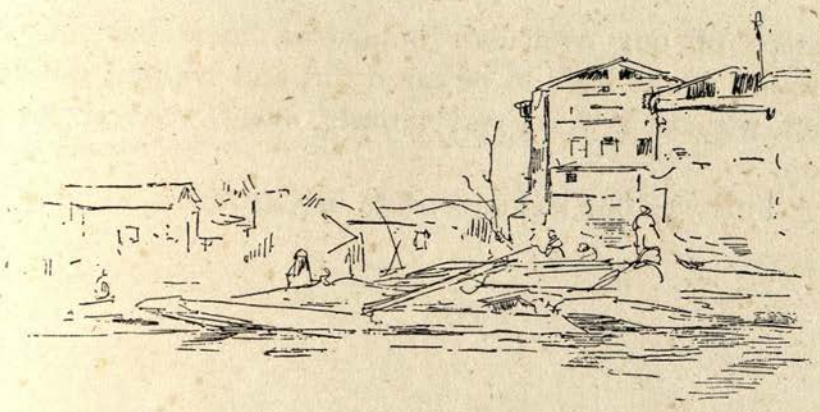
Cashmere

When I painted in Cashmere, my great wish was to realise the brilliancy of Indian sunlight, to represent the dazzling luminosity of the atmospheric effects, rather than to make studies of the local colour and native types. As a means to the end, I adopted a particular manner of using oil paint, applying it to my canvas in such a way that the surface of each picture had something of the quality of pastel. By this device, and by avoiding hard definition in the rendering of light or shade masses, I succeeded, I think, in fairly suggesting the curious shimmer of heat, and the blaze of light which in the tropics bleaches even the most vivid colours and modifies them to a harmony of warm greys.

Once when travelling in Cashmere I and my daughter had a very narrow escape. Our guide had gone on before to prepare a meal for us at the next dak bungalow and somehow or other we lost our way. To add to our discomfort, we knew that just about this time people were being murdered right and left by the natives for a rupee or two. Night came on, dark purple night, and it was impossible to see a foot ahead. We could not even guide our horses, but trusted rather to their instinct. Yet, for all we knew, they might at any moment dash us over a precipice into the water thousands of feet below. The loneliness of that ride was simply petrifying. Suddenly, in the distance we saw a light, and as we drew nearer we could detect little black forms jumping in front of it. Presently two lights detached themselves from the general mass, and came moving towards us. As they approached, we discovered that they were car-



A SINGING GIRL, CASHMERE



ried by black men, giants, as they seemed to us in our fear. They advanced, waving flaming natural torches, made of boughs of trees, above their heads, and shouting in hoarse voices. They dashed straight up to us, swung me off my horse on to their shoulders, as though I were a feather-weight, while another man led my daughter's pony. We thought that our last moment had come, that they were about to murder us, crucify us, or hack us in pieces. My daughter told me afterwards that she had thought during the few hours that followed of everything she had ever done or said; she had even thought of the back-garden and the fowl-run. For my part, I endeavoured to be very polite, and from my undignified position I even tried to bow, and to flatter our captors on their personal appearance, though it was in a small, faint voice. They took not the slightest notice of either of us, however, but trudged on and on for about six miles. Suddenly they stopped, and laid us down very gently on the

steps of our own dak bungalow, took our horses round to the back to be cared for, and slipped quietly off, without a word, and without even a request for a tip.

This was our last adventure in Cashmere.

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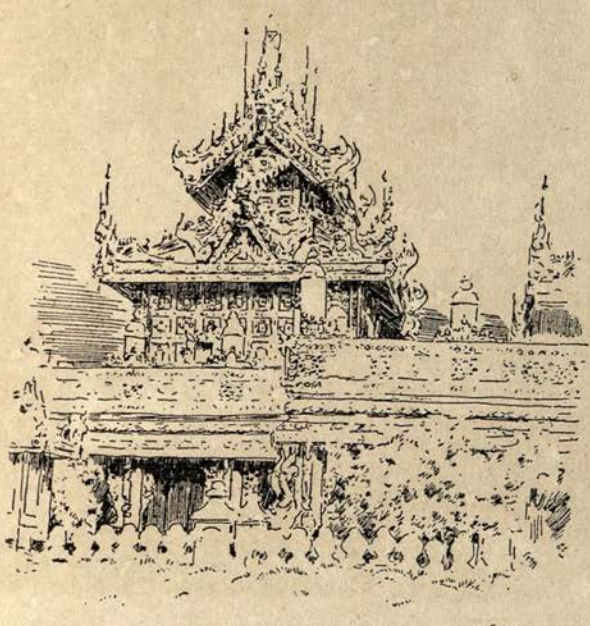
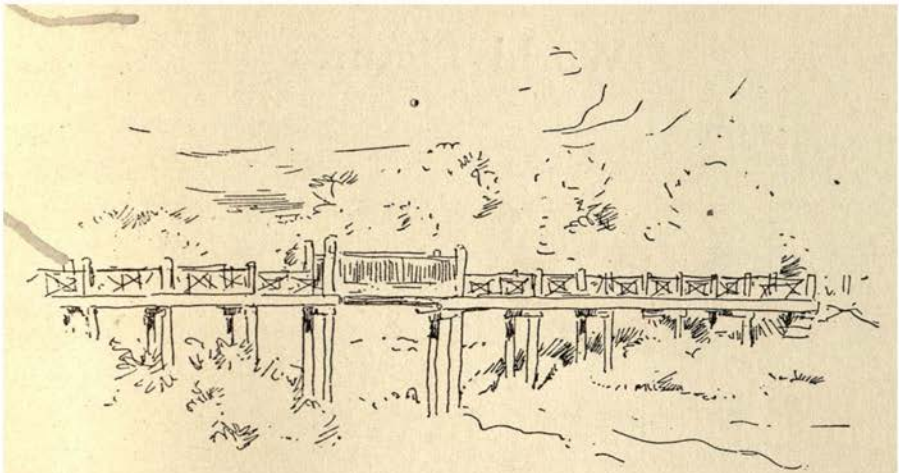
BURMA



"ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY"



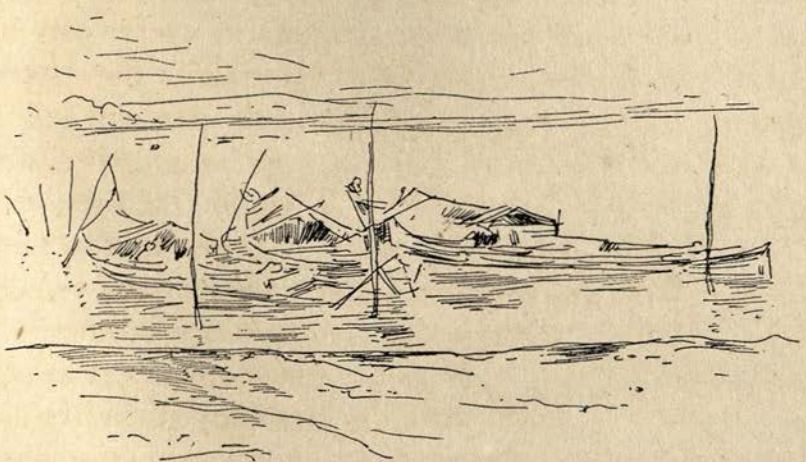
BURMA

On the way to Mandalay I met a remarkably pretty little Burmese girl. She got into the same railway carriage with me, and her small face wore an expression of such unutterable grief that I felt constrained to say something to her. "Can you speak English?" I asked in a loud, clear voice. With the prettiest, sobbing, broken accent I have ever heard, she answered, "Just a little." "But you seem very sad. Where are you going?" I inquired. "Ah," she said, "I am going to Mandalay. I have just been to Rangoon to see my husband off. He is an English officer; he is going away in a big boat, and he may never, never come back to me again." Here the poor little girl broke down entirely. "Dear me, that is very terrible. What is your name?" said I very gently. She looked up at me from out of her little pocket handkerchief with serious, woe-begone eyes, and gave me a long, utterly unpronounceable Burmese name. I told her I

thought it rather a strange name, and difficult for me to pronounce. "Yes," she said, "I suppose that would seem a strange name to you. But you know he never called me that; he called me by quite a different name, an English name; he always called me 'Darling.'" And this poor little lonely mite was proud and comforted in the possession of a real English name.

Burma is the land of orchids; rare blooms grow in abundance on every hillside, and flourish in lieu of geraniums in every cottage window. From being isolated throughout so long a period of her history, Burma has evolved quite a type of her own. The Burmans are a charming, loyal, light-hearted people, and their system of education is simple, but very good. The children, adored by every one, are allowed to go wherever they choose, and do whatever pleases them most; hardly anything is denied to them. Adults interest themselves in their sports and games, and every little detail of their daily life and education; in fact,

they are looked upon as their equals in every respect. Thus a Burman's childhood is one long dream of unmitigated joy. He is rarely punished, for he is seldom naughty, and he is taught to reverence every one older or weaker than himself. Burma reminds me to a very great extent of Japan; the people there have that same happy temperament, and love of the beautiful, the same unselfish, loyal disposition as have the Japanese. The young Burman is taught from a very early age to be brave and self-reliant. When only one year old, a baby is trusted to crawl or walk alone upon a flimsy platform, on a bamboo mat several feet above the ground or water. Its own natural instincts to bathe and splash about in the first warm, dirty shower-puddle it comes across are never restrained by the mother; the child thus soon becomes accustomed to water; and as Burman babies wear little or no clothing, no real harm is done. When a child is four years old,



all the friends of the family assemble to decide upon its name. If a boy, and adopts a religious life, he enters upon his monastic novitiate between the ages of twelve and seventeen. He is equipped in royal attire, and is attended with much pomp and magnificence to the monastery. A recluse is showered with presents and comforts of every possible kind in Burma, since nothing is considered too good or too beautiful for a man who devotes his whole life to religious services. A Burman's idea of a perfect life is, first, to become healthy, then to acquire knowledge, then to become versed in the art of pleasing, and lastly to marry, after which he settles down to work. Having amassed sufficient wealth, he leaves his work to his children, and spends the remainder of his life in pious devotion to his religion. This accomplished, he dies perfectly content, with his brightest ambition realised. Children swarm everywhere in Burma, in the streets, in the gardens, and in the houses, and woe betide the unfortunate person who dares to wound or repulse even one of these little ones. Parents employ their leisure hours in making boats

WATCHING A BOAT RACE, BURMAH.

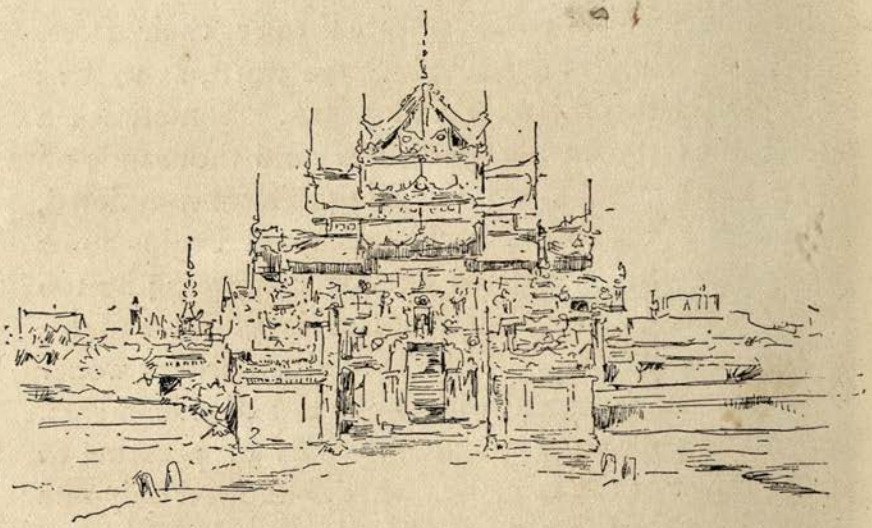
and kites and peg-tops for their children, also in teaching them the use of those implements which they must handle in after life, such as mills for grinding rice, spring wheels, boats, and carts, and tools used in pottery, dyeing, weaving, lacquer-making, blacksmith's work, etc, etc. The children grow up with these things, and later learn to take a real share in their manipulation.

A Burmese crowd is the most brilliantly coloured spectacle you could possibly imagine. I remember once going to see a boat race. The race itself was interesting, for thousands and thousands of men competed. They were all huddled together and paddling away for dear life, while one or two stood up, dancing and singing and venting war-whoops to encourage the rowers to greater energy. But the performance was as nothing compared to the picture created by those scores of spectators massed together on the slope of a sandy bank, in every variety of gay costume, in silks, satins, and smiles, enveloped in a blazing sun-charged atmosphere; every eye was expectant and strained for a glimpse of the struggle taking place between the rival boats. The Indian silks are lovely, but they are

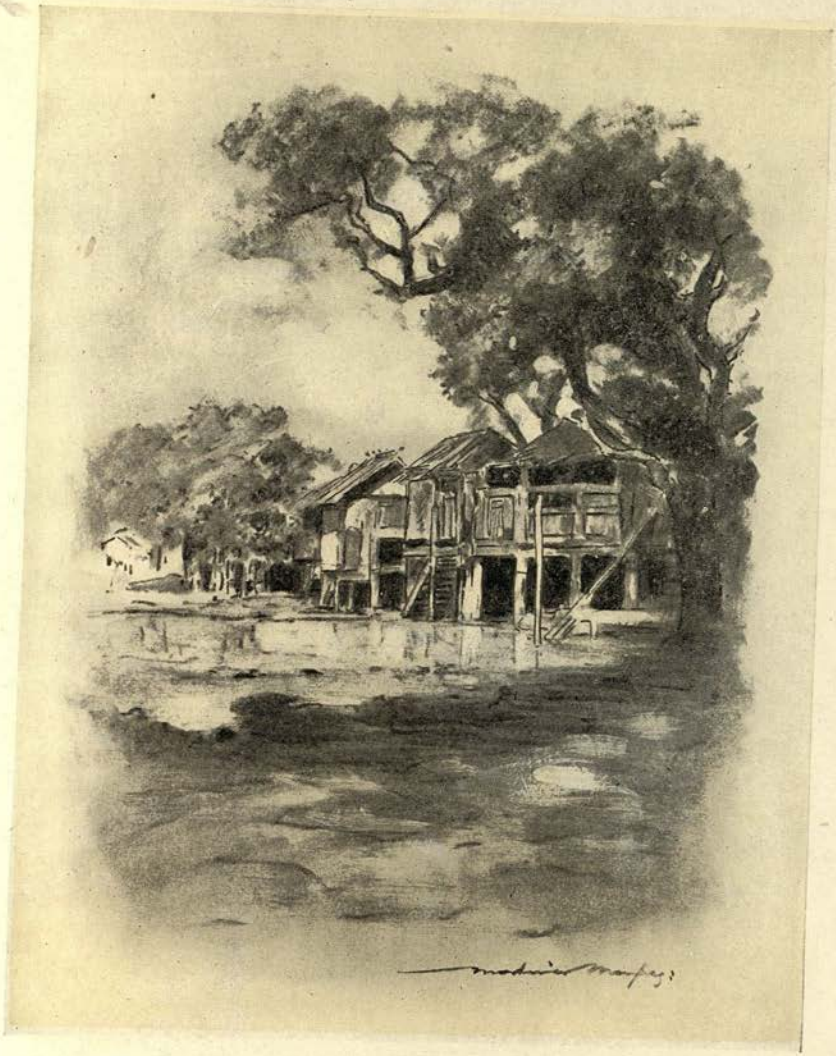
as coarse as canvas compared with the dresses of these people; and the colours were marvellous. There were pinks, yellows, oranges; the turbans were of rich deep red and old rose, and the umbrellas of every hue imaginable. The sky was pale blue overhead, and the scene full of brilliant and yet most exquisitely and subtly harmonised colour; it was eloquent with joyousness and hot with Eastern sunshine.

Burmese women are the most delightful people imaginable, their manners are so cultured and refined. Their dress is composed of a single length of cloth or silk wound round and about the figure; flowers and jewels being worn in the hair, and over the shoulders kerchiefs made generally of bright Chinese embroidery. Every evening, when the day's work is over, and the plates have been washed and put away after the evening meal, the young girls of every family retire to beautify themselves for the visits of their beaux. Tresses of false hair are wound in amongst their own

and a thick white paste smeared over their faces. Heavy gold bangles or ear-plugs are worn, as well as broad necklaces of jewels and pearls. Sometimes a woman will carry on her person several thousands of rupees' worth of gold. Her evening toilette completed, the girl descends to the house-place and begins some light, easy work. Presently the lover appears; he too has made his toilette, and his face is glossy and his long hair neatly coiled. If he is at all an ardent wooer he should arrive laden with flowers and ornaments, oranges, rolls of poetry, and all kinds of presents to lay at the feet of the fair one. He is allowed only one hour of bliss, for the old people, who are always somewhere in the background acting as chaperons, retire to bed soon after twilight. Of course this is a very advanced stage in Burman love-making; the Gordian knot is then almost tied. Many forms and observances have already been gone through at the cost of much patient labour on the part of the young man. In the beginning he makes love by hypnotism, that is to say, wherever the girl goes he follows her; whether she goes to market to sell or buy, or



whether she goes for a walk down the street, he must be there, staring hard at her face, his eyes almost bolting out of his head. I once painted a silk market in Mandalay. I was there for quite a fortnight, and every day I saw a silly fool of a boy seated on an upturned barrel, never moving a muscle, but staring with all his might and main at a very pretty little girl selling silks in a stall. She apparently was perfectly unconscious of his gaze, and went on with her work, never once looking in his direction. Nevertheless, she had seen him; somehow or other out of the corner of her eye she had taken note of his clothes, his features, his bearing, and by the next day she could tell you exactly how much money he had got and who his parents were. After three days of this, a girl, having satisfied herself that the man is a good match, will turn her head and look at him once or twice. This is



AN UP COUNTRY VILLAGE

considered to be a giddy day; the lover is more than content, and is nervous and hysterical, for his affairs are advancing almost too rapidly. If, by chance, at the end of a week the girl has looked at him for three or four minutes at a time, he is transported into a seventh heaven of joy, and if when two weeks are over, her eyes have lingered continually in his direction, he begins to make his toilette for the twilight visit. Then comes the supreme moment of his life. He is admitted into a lower room and told to push his hand through a hole in the ceiling; there he must wait some minutes, trembling with anticipation. If the girl likes him, the hand will be firmly grasped; if she rejects his suit, it will be rapped sharply over the knuckles. Some years ago in Burma it was not at all an unusual thing if a girl really disliked a man for her to take out a knife and playfully chop off one or two fingers.

World Pictures

Burma is full of fascinating subjects for the painter. If an artist were to pitch his sketching easel at, let us say, a street corner in Mandalay, and supposing his search to be not only for the fatal "picturesque," but simply for life, life of air, of light, of movement and accident, he would find a wealth of material of which artists are, as a body, entirely ignorant, even though he were to paint Burma taken unawares, as she comes and goes in her working garments. There are few, if any, countries where such a vast field lies open to the artist as in India, and there is not one which has been so sparsely and feebly occupied. From the eternal snows of the Himalayas to Ceylon, the mountains, jungles, rivers, palaces, and people, all supply materials which from their magnitude and wealth of colouring almost defy reproduction. It is this, perhaps, that has made painters of standing shrink from venturing upon the undertaking; at any rate, the ground remains practically unbroken, and beneath it lies a mine not only of material, but of gold for whoever successfully explores it. It is astonishing that artists have practically allowed amateurs to be the sole traffickers in a most important business. In Mandalay one might almost hold up a frame to nature and, shifting it about, paint haphazard what may be seen through it.

Burma

As in Japan, the interest of the artist or the writer in Burma is much engaged by the children. There is a child among large red pots on a bamboo balcony; three little figures are taking a quiet smoke on the road; a tired woman is carrying her baby home on her hip, which is the way of perambulating children about in Burma. This mother has evidently had a hard day's toil, and the infant is weary, too. Both mother and child are gnawing at some luscious sugar cane, but apparently with little relish, having waited for food so long that they are simply too exhausted to enjoy their meal. A sturdy little child comes trotting down the road clothed in a single white garment, though, judging from the charming indifference portrayed in the face, the small person would be just as happy without any clothes at all. A slender girl in a rich red garment is turning towards an inner chamber like a cave. But if I were to call attention to all the delightful little peeps into Burman child life to be seen during a single morning while sketching in the streets I should have no room to say anything else.

I was at first a little disappointed at the colour of the sky; it had not the full deep tone of even an

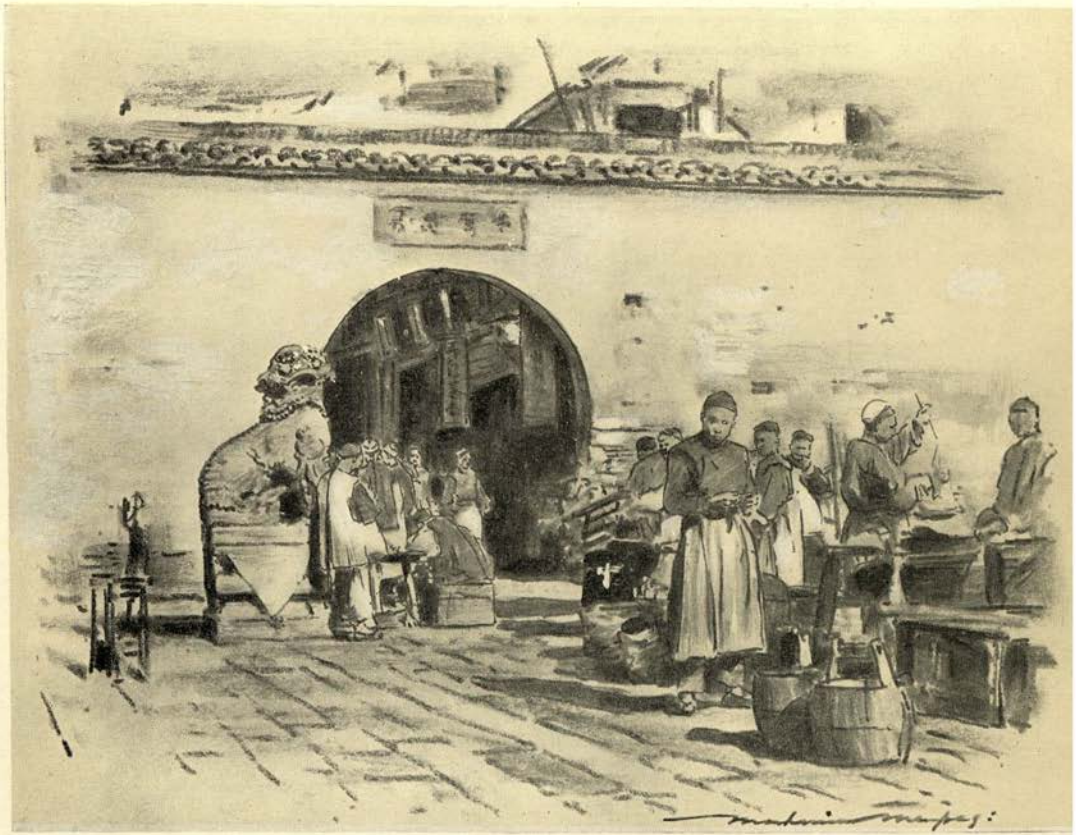
Italian sky, but something of the slatey hue much affected by modern painters, especially in France. What I enjoyed most of all were the street scenes, with their accompaniment of brightly dressed figures set out upon backgrounds of shop or temple, or the

masses of buildings, mostly in sunlight. The effect of the sunlight throwing violet shadows is very brilliant, without being dazzling. The scenes swim in light, the air seems tremulous with colour. To produce this quality of colour trembling in the light, or mysterious in the shade, upon canvas is no common achievement, — one indeed apparently untried by most artists, whose paint is as dead as a paving stone. I shall not attempt to exhaust the artistic variety of the scenes, — the butchers' shops, with their green awnings; the picturesque confusion of forms on the river, with its

AT MANDALAY, BURMAH

medley of boats and poles and stages; the delicate and complicated drawing of architectural masses; the trees sometimes with their gold leaves melting into a morning sky, sometimes flecking a red wall at sundown with a trembling network of shadow; the river with the white sun just glinting on it, and the slight wooden bridge, over which are passing in single file six or seven tired labourers returning from their toil. The white glint of sun seems to say good-bye and good-night.

CHINA



IN THE CITY OF SHANGHAI

CHINA

THE colouring of China, of her cities and canals, reminds me of a meerschaum pipe, the old and favourite pipe of an inveterate smoker. The cities, with their rich red-browns and golds ranging right away down to blue-blacks, have an ancient, smoked, and polished appearance, partly due to actual varnish, but mainly to the continual friction of thousands of human bodies from time immemorial. The gardens are black and sooty in colour, the lakes are green and stagnant, and yet to the painter how beautiful! The rocks and temples look cold, bleak, and neglected, but what perfect design and placing is here! They are strangely saddening, these poor dead gardens, ghosts of an art that was once so great, but which has lain buried for two thousand years, and is now as stagnant as their lakes. They are evidences of a people whose minds were once so fine and so creative, of an empire the

greatest and the most ancient on the face of the earth, that had attained its present civilisation at a time when all Europe might be considered comparatively as barbarous. One feels that they are marking time, these people, that they are waiting for something. Their minds and imaginations are as fine as ever; they do not lack the genius to conceive nor the dexterity to execute; and yet they remain stationary. Surely when China does move forward once more we shall hear of it.

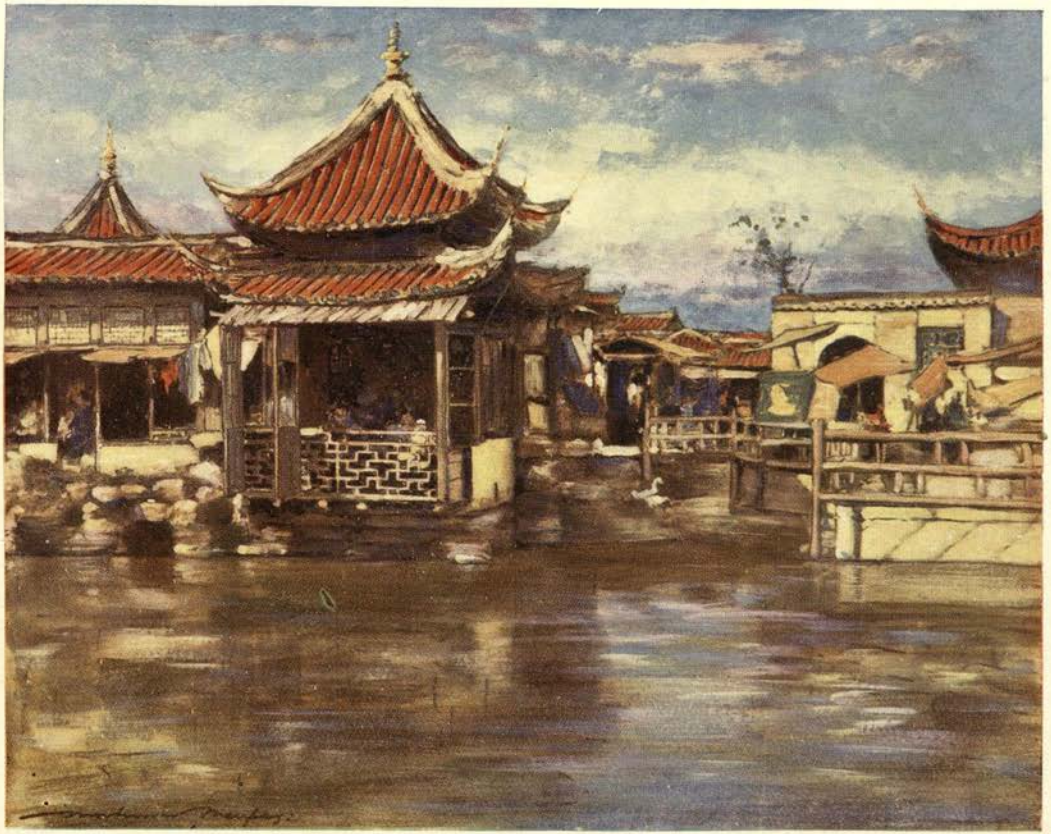
The finest picture I have ever seen was painted by a Chinaman; the manufacture of earthenware has been brought by the Chinese to a pitch of perfection unequalled by any nation; their discovery of paper-making is of very ancient date, while of the antiquity of the art of printing in China there can be no doubt. With the state among them of agriculture, the therapeutic art, and the sciences I will not deal, as I am concerned more nearly with things Chinese that are beautiful and picturesque. Their architecture, music, literature, and painting are greatly undervalued and quite misunderstood by the average traveller in China.

For instance, I had a preconceived idea that Chinese architecture was void of taste, grandeur, beauty, or convenience, whereas it appealed to me tremendously from the artistic standpoint. I found it beautiful in line, quaint and unexpected in arrangement, magnificent in colour, and their pagodas and temples, stone figures and columns towering on the hills like monuments to departed greatness, interested me extremely.

With regard to Chinese poetry, modern and ancient, it is difficult for a European to form a proper judgment, and their music to the Western ear is equally involved; while upon the perfection of their various instruments — clarionets, kettle-drums, gongs, and violoncellos — I am quite incapable of passing an opinion. The manufacture of silks has been established in China at a period too remote to be ascertained from history, but perhaps of all the mechanical arts the cutting of ivory and the manufacture of various metals and trinkets of silver and gold filigree are those in which the Chinese have attained the highest degree of perfection.

China is the country for the artist, not for the nice-minded tourist who looks upon its dirt as dirt and

not as tone, who shudders as he passes their many butchers' shops, revolts at the sight of cats, dogs, and nests of mice displayed for sale in lieu of beef and mutton. The decorative sense of the artist overcomes his natural dislike for what he sees there; the horrors of the butcher's shop are to him unknown, and he looks upon them merely as gorgeous notes or colour-splashes of red on a grey street. Loathsome diseases pass by and leave him unmoved; nauseous odors come not near his nostrils; no thoughts of any significance in nature present themselves to him, except the purely artistic delights of colour and form. China is, *par excellence*, the happy hunting-ground of the impressionist; and to the painter who goes there for inspiration, so clear and impartial a mirror as that of



A TEA-HOUSE, SHANGHAI, CHINA.

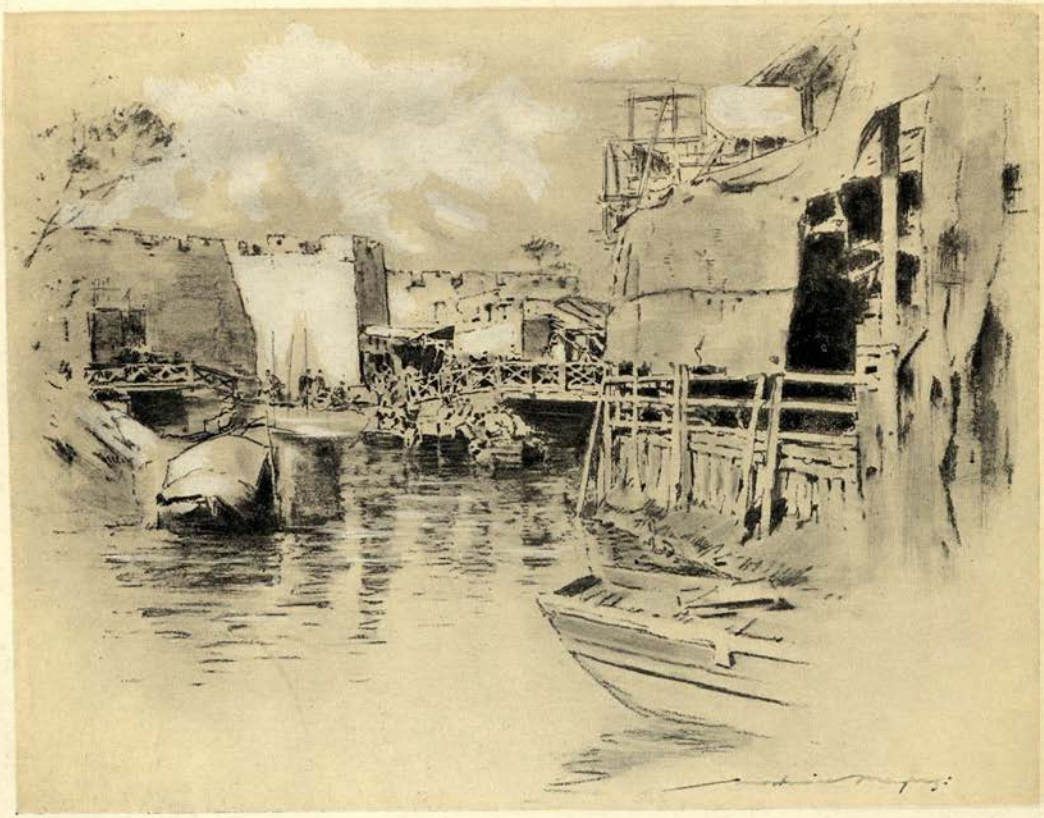
China

Tennyson's heroine, the Lady of Shalott, might well be the only guide in the choice of subjects. He need feel but the one regret, that no matter how keen and rapid may be his powers of observation, he can fix and make his own only a meagre selection of the hundred pictures on every side. The joss houses, the river scenes, the gardens, the streets, all overwhelm and daze him with a wealth of colour and surfeit of subjects. Of all the many possible pictures, perhaps that of a typical street scene will transport the reader most effectually into the true atmosphere of China, and give him some faint idea of that country which, in my opinion, is the most gorgeous, fantastic, and truly beautiful to be seen on the face of the globe.

Imagine yourself standing in the principal street of the old native city of Shanghai, watching a bony,

browned, and wrinkled old man, with his horde of assistants, dyeing silks and cottons in the open air, using dyes of colours which have never been seen out of China,—delicate blues suggestive of the skies of some of the early Italian pictures, yellows you have never yet seen, and vermilions only dreamt of. Imagine this man printing coarse linens with beautiful designs, exactly as a wood-engraver prints a fine India proof, by burnishing from the back, and offering for sale this fine work which has taken him a whole week to execute at the meagre sum of twopence per yard. Close by the cotton printer you may see a poor wretch with his head stuck through a block of wood, every one as they pass jostling and kicking him; he has perhaps stolen something.

The first and predominating feature of the scene is the blaze and breadth of life. Radiating, palpitating light hangs before everything like a veil, shutting out detail by excess of brilliancy. Wherever the light shines, the colouring is brown and rich, but on peering beneath archways and into shops one looks into a bluey-black atmosphere, in which little ivory figures detach themselves crisply and delicately but never abruptly. The whole city has a battered, ramshackle, and ancient appearance. There are enormous lanterns of fantastic shapes



CANTON

at street corners, adorned with sweeps of red and black lettering, lanterns that look as if they had been there always; the houses have a tumble-down appearance and are of natural wood, with a deal of dainty lattice work about them looking like lace; the

joss houses are neglected and forlorn; the dogs half starved, with the bones piercing through their flesh; little round-headed, ivory-coloured children sit sad and serious, playing in the gutters; while old gentlemen of over a hundred, but hale and hearty, are seen literally frisking about the city. Blues, greens, golds, and vermilions abound everywhere; long strips of signboards

hang from every house, bearing inscriptions in gilt characters setting forth the nature of the wares to be sold, and the honest reputation of the seller; temples with pagoda-shaped roofs and golden images fill one with a

kind of supernatural awe as one passes; large gateways, splendidly gilt and coloured, are placed at different points in the city, and these are monuments to the memory of those who have deserved well of the community, or who have attained an unusual longevity.

Against this brilliant background full of colour is the surging mass of the people, ever flowing onward like a gigantic wave. It seems rather sad in colour, with the ivory-hued faces, blue or black cotton jackets, wide

cotton trousers, and large straw hats and shoes. Here and there an aristocrat is to be seen with his short jacket buttoned close round the neck and folded across the breast, the sleeves remarkably wide, his quilted satin petticoat, black velvet cap, and black satin boots. Women are commonly seen among the crowd, either walking or being trundled along in wheelbarrows. Most of them are dressed in blue cotton frocks like those of the men, reaching to the middle of the thigh, with red, green, or yellow trousers reaching a little below the calf of the leg, where they are drawn in close, the better to display an ankle and a foot, which, for singularity at least, may challenge the world. This little, distorted, disproportionate member is as fine as tinsel and tawdry ornament can make it, and the ankle is bandaged round with parti-coloured cloths, ornamented with fringe and tassel. The hair, which is screwed up close behind and folded into a ridge or knot across the crown of the head, is adorned with large artificial asters

of red, blue, or yellow, and two bodkins of silver, brass, or iron. The face and neck are daubed with white lead and vermilion, and the eyebrows blackened.

Shanghai is full of buzzing, palpitating life; the houses are full; the streets are full; the dingy little

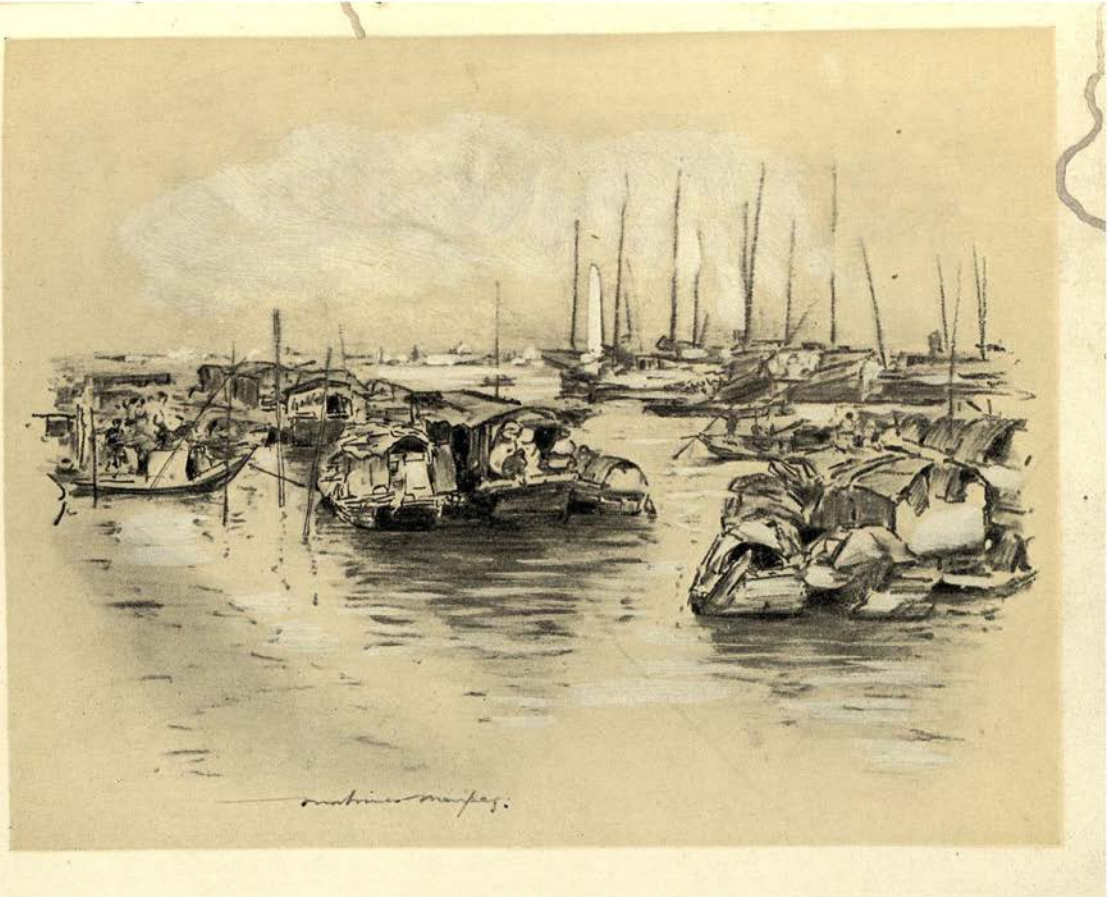
shops are full. There is no loafing; each one is intent on his own particular business. And everything is business in China; the streets are lined with sellers of the most curious wares imaginable; doubtful dainties of quaint colours and shapes are spread out on flat wooden trays, or perched on barrels to tempt the passer-by; curious fruits in wicker baskets are sold by doubled-up, wizen-faced old men; also daintily carved wooden gods, rice, tea, and other eatables. All these tents and booths, as well as the movable workshops of tinkers, gilders, wood-carvers, cobblers, and blacksmiths

NURSERY GARDEN, CHINA.

swarming in the road, contract the spacious street into a narrow pathway, just wide enough for two of the little vehicles to pass one another. All is in motion. There are processions of men in office passing continually with their numerous retinues, bearing umbrellas and flags, painted lanterns, and a variety of strange insignia of their owner's rank and station; troops of dromedaries laden with coal from Tartary; wheelbarrows and handcarts stuffed with vegetables; pedlars with their packs; jugglers, conjurors, comedians, fortune-tellers, and mountebanks; while the buzz and confused noises of this mixed multitude is positively deafening. There are trains accompanying, with lamentable cries, corpses to their graves, and, with equally squalling music, wives to their husbands; there is the bawling of those who are crying their wares; the wrangling of others; with every now and then a strange twanging noise like the jarring of a

cracked Jew's-harp, — this is the barber's signal made by his tweezers; and the mirth and laughter that prevails in every group could scarcely be exceeded. This strange system of economising space in the roads answers very admirably; there are few accidents, both pedestrians and equestrians jogging along at whatever pace they choose. I have even seen men stop on the pavement to eat a whole square meal from a cooking apparatus, without causing a serious obstruction.

The river scenes in China are the most picturesque in the world. A capacious volume might be written upon this subject alone. In Shanghai harbour there are thousands of sampans stretching away literally for miles around, and so closely packed together that one might go for a six-mile walk on the ocean by stepping



ON THE YELLOW RIVER

from one to the other. A great proportion of the population are born and live and die upon their sampans; whole families live, eat, and sleep, huddled together, beneath one little bamboo covering all the year round, in sun, in rain, in all weathers. Here many trades are carried on, such as making baskets and lanterns, tearing up weeds that grow beneath the water, fishing, and cooking rice; and the activity of these people in their floating homes, whether old men or little babies, is quite extraordinary. There are boats laden with cargoes of flowers and vegetables; junks of colossal size, carrying monstrous sails tattered and patched with gorgeous rags; cormorant fishing boats, and many strange craft of all forms and colours, and many of which I do not know the names or uses.

When one gets out into the real country in China it is then beautiful and picturesque as far as one can see. Emerald-green rice fields stretch away into the distance, intersected and cut up by creeks and canals,

clumps of trees, and bamboo groves, which last, in my opinion, form the most beautiful and impressive sights imaginable. The land is well cultivated, and everywhere there are well-kept farms, and villages of queer thatched houses, just such as one might see in any little English hamlet. China is dotted all over with graveyards. The country is full of them, and the graves vary greatly in shape; some are mere mounds of earth, others are like miniature houses; some are

covered over with thatched straw, while those of the mandarins take up almost a mile of ground and are possessed of wide avenues of trees, flights of marble steps, stone statues, and a great deal of rich carving. Nearly all the streets in China are mostly composed of undertakers' shops or butchers' shops, the former displaying in their windows magnificent funeral biers, mingled with equally gorgeous marriage cars.

The joss houses are the most curious places of all. Both people and priests alike seem to treat their religion as one huge joke, and outwardly, at any rate, appear to have no respect for the person of the sacred Buddha whatever; they throw paper pellets at him, and spend their time turning the handle of a machine that rolls off mechanically so many score of prayers a minute. The priests, in their yellow robes, circle round and round the altar like half a dozen donkeys pacing round a water-mill, and with about as much intelligence. After having completed a certain number of these rotations, and when the beads on their chaplets have all been counted, they elaborately chalk up a mark, registering in this manner the number of their ejaculations to Fo. The Chinese have a settled conviction that three spirits inhabit their bodies: one that travels topside with them when they die, one that lives in their

grave, and one that inhabits the tablet that they keep at home to be reverenced. But the one great and all-prevailing idea of the Chinese religious enthusiast is to try to the best of his ability to avoid trouble here on earth, and to make sure of a more or less good time hereafter.

Turning to another subject, I may say that a Chinese dinner, contrary to one's already preconceived ideas of that meal, is very pleasant indeed to the Western palate. To be sure, now and again when your host desires to do you especial honour, he will have served a nest of warm new-born mice; but that, happily for the Englishman, is only on rare occasions. Ordinarily Chinese dishes are excellent, neatly dressed, and served in dainty porcelain bowls. The pastry for lightness and snowiness might challenge the world,

A RIVER SCENE, CHINA

France not excepted; the soups with their savouring of soy and other ingredients are delightful, and the vermicelli, of course, is above reproach. The luxury of ice is, in the larger Chinese cities, within the reach of the poorest peasant, and all fruits are cooled upon it. A criterion may be formed of the state of mind in which a Chinaman happens to be by the number and quantity of the dishes at table.

Night in China, with its deep blues and orange light, appeals to me more than any hour of the day. On the night of the famous feast of lanterns the whole empire is lighted up from one extremity to the other in every possible

way that fancy can suggest, and the people exercise their ingenuity by making transparencies in the shape of different animals, — birds, beasts, and fishes, — with which they run up and down the streets by night, accompanied by squibs, squalling music, sky rockets,

coloured fire, and what not; the effect is whimsical enough. On this night the cities are cities of lanterns, the roads and roofs and houses being strung with them. There are lanterns in the shape of weird beasts such as have never been seen on the earth, carried about on poles, and there are processions of lanterns which are truly beautiful, for the tawdry side is lost in the gloom, and only the fantastic shapes loom ghost-like and golden against the purple night.

JAPAN

JAPAN

JAPAN is the land of flowers; so the travellers have told us. We see in the picture books that they bring back with them strange, and to our minds distorted, pictures of flowers arranged in vases, of gardens with miniature pine trees curved and twisted into decorative patterns. Everything in these picture books is queer, exaggerated, impossible. Why, even the babies' heads are represented as being carved with designs, quaint little knobs of jet-black hair being left isolated on diminutive white pates. Caricatures! ridiculous! we remark. Not at all. The picture book baby is an exact portrait of the living, breathing, Japanese child. The picture book gardens, the picture book houses, are exact representations of gardens and houses, as one sees them blooming and standing in the streets and open places of Japan. How true they are one does not realise until actually visiting the country.

A flower-land Japan is said to be, and a flower-land it is in very truth. From Haru (that is, springtime, February) round to Haru again, flower fêtes and flower festivals are a part of the little Jap's life. Almost every month is known by its special blossom. We have our groves of oaks or elms or chestnuts. They have their avenues of flower-bearing trees. In February, the eldest brother of a hundred flowers, the weirdly formed plum tree, is in bloom. It is at that time leafless. It keeps in flower for four weeks, and it is not a little group of trees that you find, but an avenue a mile long, sometimes two miles or even longer. April is the month of the cherry tree. The blossom does not cling so long as the plum; the wind scatters it more quickly. Here we grow the single flower for fruit. In Japan the tree is grown for the delight of the eye; so the double bloom is seen most often. White with a tinge of green is the rarer bloom; but there are great sheets of the pale pink blossoms. The cherry is hardly turning into fruit before you have the wistaria in flower, great screens of purple, the flowers hanging in deep fringes that are undreamt of with us. The bluebell is not a stranger at this time, nor the azalea. Then in June the irises come — a wonderland in them-

AN IRIS GARDEN, JAPAN

selves. They line the million tiny streams in the gardens. They form a flower-bed along the sides of the rivers — a carpet of jewels, of white, purple, and gold. It would be audacity to attempt to describe the effect. The word "magnificent" but poorly conveys the idea. With the iris come the peony and lotus flower. The peony is a great flower, sometimes as big as a football; some of the blooms measure a foot across. The hydrangea and the sunflower are companions at this time; the carnation is also a favourite flower, and is seen in great variety. In early autumn the chrysanthemum puts in an appearance. In Japan it is a giant among its fellows, a multitude in itself. I cannot tell you the number of varieties, they seem to be infinite; the greatest number are white, then comes yellow.

I brought some flowers home with me one day; it was in the springtime in Tokio, and the flower was cherry blossom. I arranged them in a pot, in a bunch as I always used to do at home, and stood a few paces off to view them. What was the matter? The flow-

ers looked ugly and wrong. Over and over again I tried, but still with the same result. Then I made up my mind I would go to a Japanese professor in the art of flower arrangement and learn from him. I found then how much there was to learn. First of all, I discovered a fact of which I am sure nearly every one is ignorant; namely, that the arrangement of flowers in Japan has for centuries been regarded as a fine art, — an art the property of the learned men, and the men of letters, and the ladies of the aristocracy.

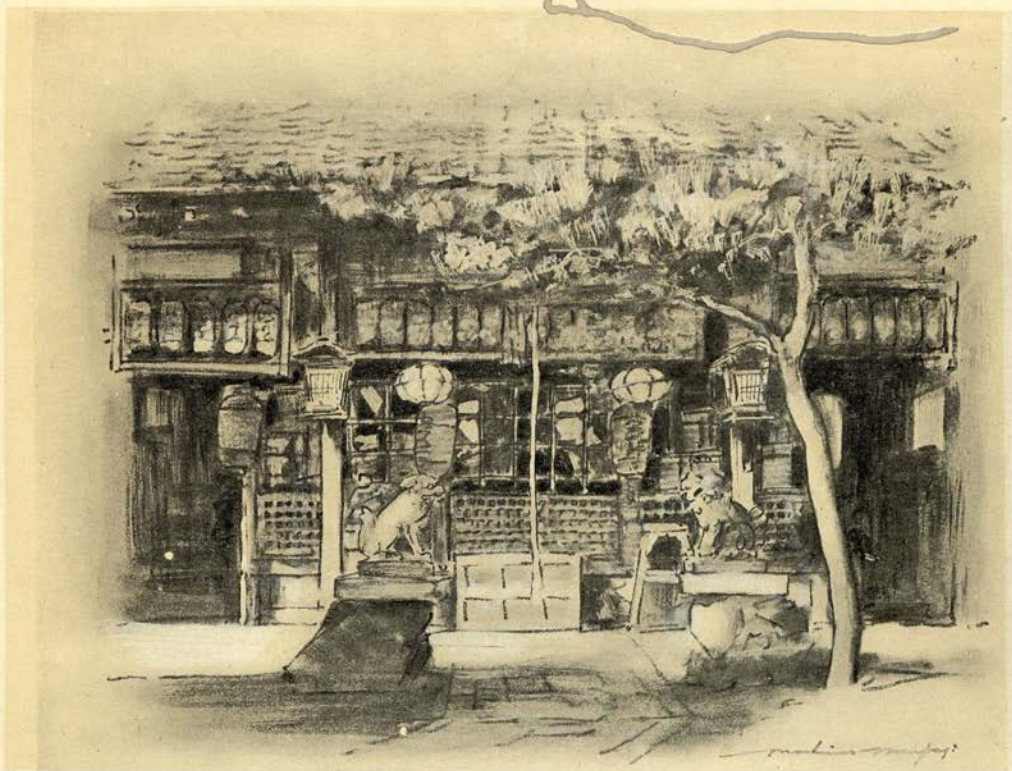
Tradition governs all things. As in the garden, so in the arrangement of a bouquet, nature is deceived by art. Bouquets are arranged on a system. There are the three, five, and seven line arrangements, and so on. In composing a bouquet the Japanese

would shudder at our cabbage-like mingling of flowers. He takes two, or sometimes three, kinds of flowers, perhaps with foliage, and artificially trims both flowers and foliage, forcing twig, leaf, and flower into the strange shape which fashion has taught him they should assume. In spring the bouquet is designed to look strong and sturdy to express growth; in summer, it is full and spreading to indicate luxury; in autumn, spare and lean to show that summer has gone.

To please his guest is the one idea a Japanese host has. And one side — or rather a recess in the side of the room — is where he lays himself out to pay his compliments. He hangs on his wall a kakemono, and in front of this is usually placed a vase

or a pot of flowers. By means of their arrangement he wishes you joy, health, riches, long life, a pretty wife, or some other good wish. Flowers with a strong odor are considered unsuitable for placing before a guest. There is no plant, flower, or tree, as I have said, but has a lucky or unlucky omen clinging to it.

Quaintly the Jap separates nature up into sexes. You have male and female flowers. The male is always the more vigorous, the female the simpler. In Flower-land the buds are female, the flowers male. Red, purple, and pink are male colours; blue, yellow, and white, female. The front surface of the leaf male, the under surface female. White is the colour most loved, yellow comes next. To be an expert in either flower arrangement or gardening calls for a long apprenticeship. The gardener ranks with the poet and the artist. Often he is not a workman's son, but belongs to a family of the higher grade. In the land of the Rising Sun the learned men, the poets, and the painters are nearly all students of Flower-land. It



ENTRANCE TO A TEMPLE

is a part of their education — more than that, a part of their life — to be versed in the anatomy and properties of every flower of the field.

To a Japanese a garden is his paradise. There, that which otherwise is silent has a language. All things

speak. In the gardens, not a flower is born to blush unseen; not a flower grows but has a meaning attached to it. It is of either good or evil omen. We know that you cannot paint a lily, or gild a rose, but the Japanese come very near to doing this. The planning and designing of a garden in Japan is a subtle craft — more subtle, I would say, than the work of a jewel setter.

Flowers are worshipped in Japan; they are a part

of the people's lives. The peasant is poor, but if he can he will have what is equivalent to our poor folks' window-garden, his pots of flowers. The merchant has his villa garden. This, in reality, may

not be more than fifty or sixty yards square; but, by an ingenious arrangement, it is made to appear as endless as the prospect you get in a fairy scene on the stage. Design outwits nature. A lyric becomes a highly polished sonnet. How is this brought about? Why, the Japanese gardener is an artist. Like the great painters of all times, he draws directly on nature for his material. The impossible does not exist, or barely, in the mind of a Japanese gardener. He looks on his native land as a picture. And after due contemplation, he is prepared to reproduce in miniature the main features of "the land of a thousand islands" as a whole, or in part, in the form of a landscape garden.

The garden is planned on a Lilliputian method. All is arranged to scale. You view nature with an eye no bigger than that of a tiny Japanese doll. You know what a raised or modelled bird's-eye view map of the physical geography of a district looks like. Well,

apply a very powerful magnifying glass to it and you have the idea.

The Japanese gardener works only after study and contemplation. Say he has a garden to design. His patron has visited or heard of some beautiful spot. Having heard or suggested what is wanted, the gardener-artist hies him away to the spot, and then begins to make studies. One by one, he seeks out the notable views of the place, and makes notes of them ; then contemplates, first the individual views, and then the whole scene collectively ; and ends by being prepared to build up a doll's garden scene of what he has been studying.

A bank so many feet high would represent a mountain; a tiny stream, a river; a group of a few trees, a forest. Then, miniature pagodas, temples, and shrines, all built to scale so as to fit together uniformly as a whole, add to the illusion. Half closing your eyes, you may dream that you are in a garden of royal proportions, when it is only what we should describe here, in our more prosaic way, as "a nice piece of ground attached to the house."

To be plain, a Japanese garden is a bird's-eye view, a poetical conception in which are embodied the most striking features of the landscape of the country: artificial lakes, torrent beds, a miniature living picture of some more spacious landscape. The gardener-artist works more correctly than the camera. He is warned not to follow too closely in his work the real details, but to look on the whole scene and then produce the effects. His perspective is perfect; his illusions, as I have said, are those of a scenic artist. Throughout the design there is no one spot on which the eye is allowed to

GEISHA GIRLS, JAPAN.

rest; he gains immensely by his use of variety. Yet the illusion may be roughly dispelled. I saw a dog, an ordinary sized animal, walk over one of the tiny bridges. He appeared a Gulliver among the Lilliputians.

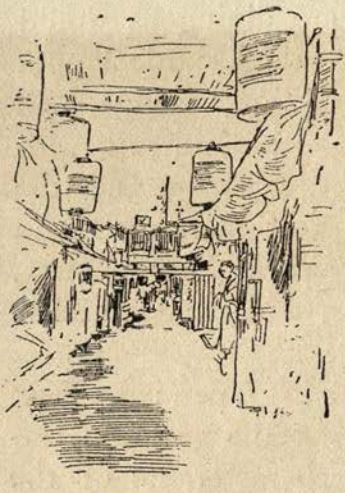
Supreme importance is paid to the smallest trifles. Even a door must not have more head nails visible in it than custom prescribes. Trees (there are but few big ones) and stones play a large part in the display of a Japanese garden. Each stone is measured, and its place is allotted with all the etiquette of the law of the Medes and Persians that altereth not. Trees, too, are arranged. For example, there is the tree of solitude, the tree of the sinking sun. Then there is the waiting stone, the perfect view stone, the guardian stone, the worshipping stone, and the stone of two gods. In this way, the garden is a kind of Walhalla. The idea is full of romance, full of beauty.

So much for Japanese Flower-land. Although my space is limited, I am tempted to wander there all day. But is Japan merely a land of flowers? Has it no other beauties to reveal, no other joys? What of the geishas, the children, the workers, the living art of the country, the painters and their methods, the science of placing, the characteristics of the people, the drama? On each and every one of these subjects a volume might be written, and much be still left unsaid. There is the geisha — the educated woman of Japan, the entertainer, the hostess, the charmer. She is the life and soul of every tea-house and feast; always gay, always laughing, always young, she forms the merry, sparkling side of Japanese life. Whenever one dines out or is entertained, a geisha forms the principal part of the entertainment. She herself

decorates the room where you are dining as would a gorgeous tropical flower, a fascinating exotic figure, a bewildering symphony in vermilion, orange, and gold. Oh, the witchery of the geishas, flirting with their fans, with the sweetest little shoes, and the daintiest little feet, and the darkest little eyes and wisps of hair in the world! Miss Pomegranate, Miss Butterfly, Lady Lavender, and Lady Heliotrope, all are equally entrancing.

How delightful it is to travel in Japan: to feast one's eyes on the gorgeous sweet-stalls and the tea-houses, the theatre exteriors so characteristic of the country, the fairs and markets, the small children blowing soap bubbles through straight straws, the booths shaded with multi-coloured umbrellas, the brilliantly coloured crimson lanterns, the quiet canals, and the curtained entrances to the shops; the demure children of the streets with their short-cropped heads and audacious faces, and their bamboo trumpets; the golden dragon screens, displayed for sale in the shops; the dye-works of Osaka, with the strips of blue fabric hanging up to dry; or the fair at Kioto, where behind the umbrella-shaded stalls you see the great stone lamps with which the Japanese cities are lighted.

The life of the Japanese streets is singularly dainty. There is a fragility and ricketiness about all the



things made by these little people, beside which our solid constructions, our iron, and clamps, and blocks, and girders, are like matters of another planet. Their shaky but dainty houses, umbrellas, cabinets, decorations, were made for gentle hands that will not break them, and beside the light touch of which our grasp looks brutal. Everything is small, and slow, and careful. When the Japanese makes his little fire, he lays on fuel fit for a doll, with little chop-sticks smaller than the tongs that lift the sugar into our cups. Things need not be very strong for people of such a gentle attitude, and this slenderness is charmingly rendered in the street scenes with the slight houses, the great rows of paper lanterns, the open shops, the gay and orderly play of the children about the sweet-meat stalls. A very great proportion of the surfaces presented to the eye are of paper, a fact which in itself suggests this Japanese slightness most expressively.

I was attracted in Japan by the shops rather than the temples, by the lanterns and stream-

CHILDREN WATCHING A PLAY

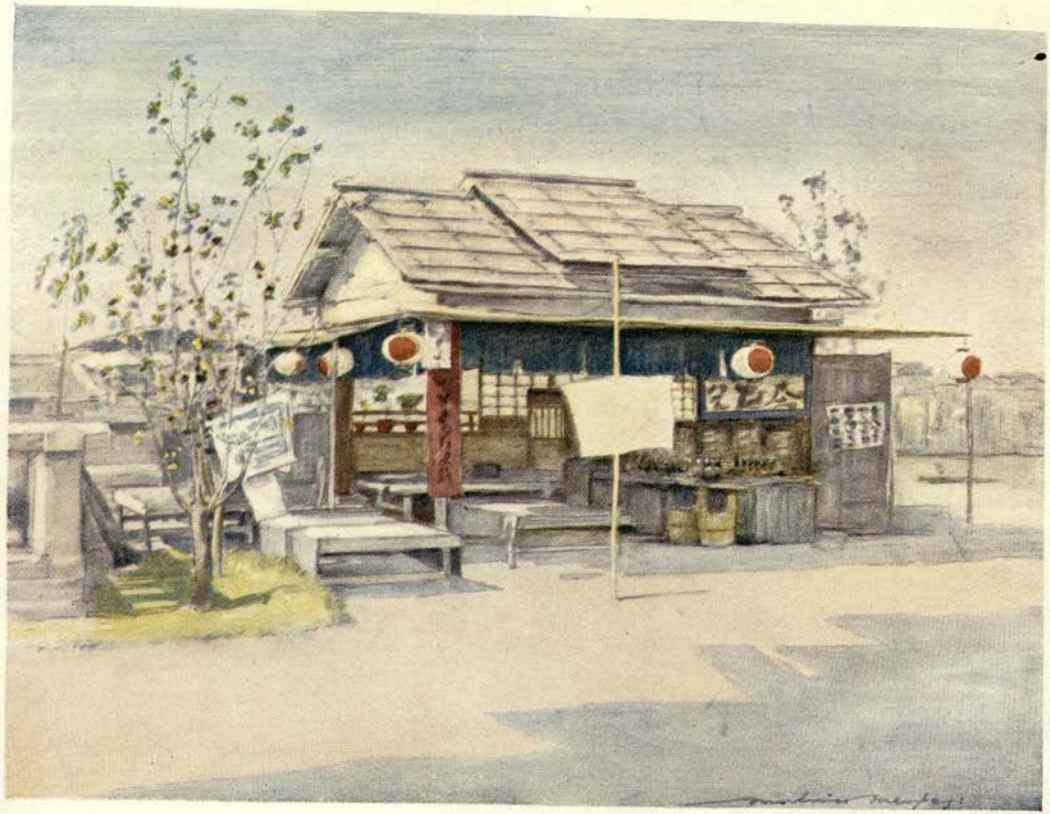
ers rather than the trees, by the dancing girls and the children rather than their fathers and mothers. I loved the butterfly beauty of the festal costumes and umbrellas, and the gorgeous hues of the lanterns; the babies with their true baby looks of wonder; the larger children blowing bubbles or intent on sweets; and the Japanese boys, philosophers every one of them, reading the Yokohama "Star," as they ran through the streets, or gathering, round-eyed and solemn, round a theatrical playbill. You may see a small Japanese maiden with another not much smaller than herself on her back, dainty and delightful as only a Japanese child can be.

The Japanese "bobby" is a dear little fellow — so tiny, so pretty, and so charmingly dressed that you feel inclined to embrace him. He is greatly respected, and I was given to understand is of noble family. Although you would have to roll about twelve together to make an average London "bobby," law and order are admirably preserved, and there are no unpleasant police scandals, no blackmailers, and no brutality. They were so polite to me that they used to put a model in position and keep him there until I had done with him. They have tremendous power, and whenever a fire takes place all that the policemen have to do is to encircle the burning building with

a piece of twine, a device which is quite sufficient to keep the crowd back. When a policeman arrests a prisoner he ties a bit of string round his arm, and he never thinks of breaking away.

One travels from place to place in rickshaws. My men sometimes carried me as far as thirty miles a day in return for a couple of shillings. The rickshaw men, by the way, always die early. They run themselves out, and frequently drop down dead in the shafts. They are tremendous "swells," and for dignity I should compare a rickshaw man with a member of our House of Lords.

The Mikado's garden is a lovely retreat, with verdant trees and shaded walks, cooled by splashing fountains, warmed by the glowing tropical sun, which shoots its brilliant rays through the leafage, and casts a thousand fleeting shadows on the lively scene below. The lines of lanterns sway in the soft wind, the band plays waltzes, — none of your tum-tum music, — the Japanese Irving struts on the improvised stage; there are old-fashioned dances, and the ladies of the ballet, who have not yet taken to tights, relieve the tedium of the tragedian. It was a delightful after-



A TEA HOUSE, JAPAN

noon I spent there, and full of curious experiences. The Mikado wore a tall hat. Yes, a tall hat, a frock coat, and patent leather boots on his feet. The court had had general orders to appear in the latest Parisian styles, so instead of the ladies tripping it like Yum Yum and the "three little maids from school" in Japanese, they wore toques and Worth "creations."

The dramatic author in Japan holds a very different position to that which is his here. He is not only the arbiter in literary matters, but he handles the whole technique of the production as regards scenery, dresses, and general mounting. There, no actor or actress with a fad would get a hearing, nor would one think of questioning the author's arrangements. Besides, there they indulge in no ridiculous attempts at realism. They don't try to deceive you with make-believe moons, and suns, and waves, grabbing at nature, as we

do here, thinking that we are producing art. If a man has to die on the stage, he breathes his last in a proper, orthodox sort of way, and then quietly gets up and walks off; or, supposing an actor comes on whose draperies require arranging, in that case some little black boys proceed to do what is necessary; the audience making it a point of honour not to see them; in fact, they are so used to this sort of thing that really I don't think they do see them. There, Art is the suggestion of Nature in colour, in tone, and appropriate patterns, while the limit of the picture is not confined to the space formed by the proscenium, the decoration being carried from the stage into the theatre, the very actors often passing through the audience from their dressing-rooms.

Another difference is the use of a rotary stage, so that the next scene can be arranged whilst one is being

presented to the audience. All the people in the pit and gallery sit on the floor; and as refreshments are constantly needed (the play lasting some time), every one regales himself, some of the people, the poorer ones, bringing in their little trays of comestibles, while the wealthier purchase them at the counters in the theatre, and proceed to warm the contents on the charcoal stoves.

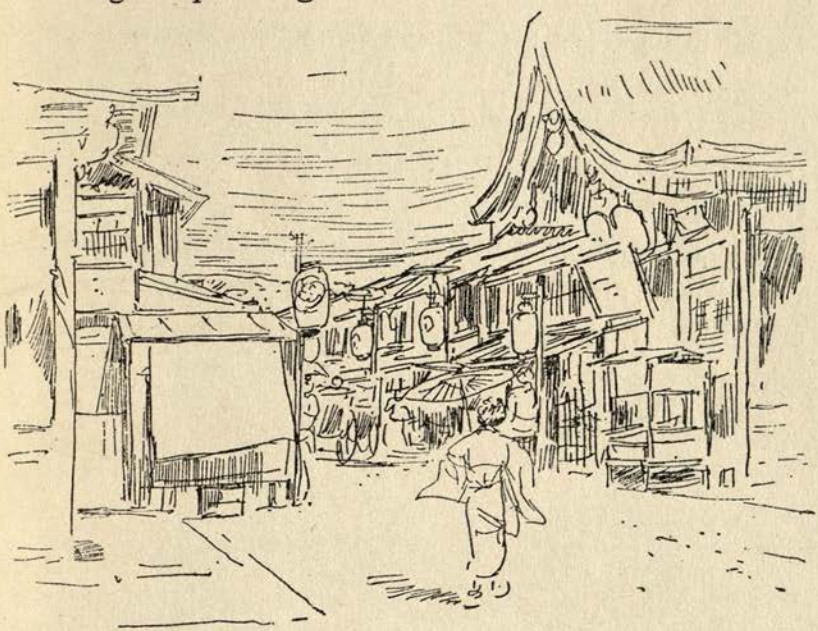
Their most eminent actor is Danjuro, a thorough artist and a most capable draftsman. He is universally admired, and an immense favourite everywhere, but he holds a very small place in society, in spite of the English residents having done much to better the general position of the dramatic profession. In fact, the Japanese regard the actor as a somewhat effeminate person, a mere strutter on the stage, and persons of rank would never dream of entertaining him in any social way; even the middle class would think twice before classing an actor among their friends. He would come more under the denomination of "acquaintance." Danjuro plays parts of every kind; and though he is sixty years of age, I have seen him play a young girl of eighteen so as to deceive the Japanese themselves. I remember on one occasion a whole row of nurses taking him for a woman

for a long time, until he made some little slip in manner or deportment which revealed the deception. You may be surprised that he should be playing a female part, but in Japan the sexes are not mixed in the companies. At some theatres the company is entirely composed of men, while at others — generally of an inferior class — only women are engaged. As a matter of fact, I think I may say that there is not a thoroughly good actress in the whole of Japan. The plays themselves may generally be classed under the head of dramas and melodramas.

I was surprised at the attention paid to rehearsing. All the players seemed

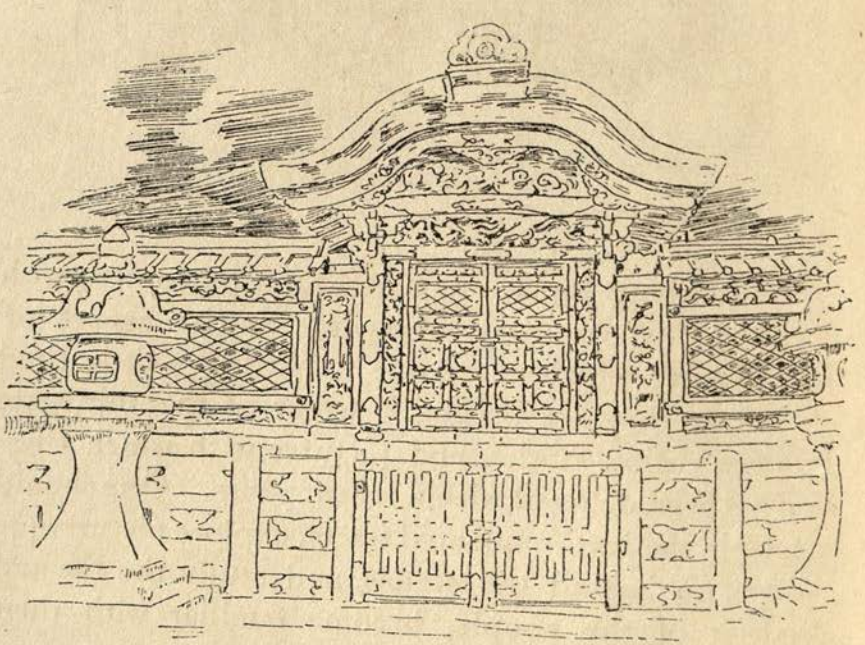
THE OGARA RIVER AT TOKIO

to be fairly letter-perfect. The costumes are most gorgeous, and the classical plays are of the most elaborate character, the correctness in detail often being due to having been copied from old drawings and original paintings.



In describing Japan one should not be content with depicting the ordinary everyday tourist aspect of Japanese life which every one is getting a little tired of, just as they are becoming weary of the third-rate Japanese curios, fabrics, and pictures with which England has been deluged within recent years. One should wander in the less frequented tracts, explore picturesque corners, go behind the scenes, and study the life and character of the people, become familiar with their

country, and master the peculiarities of their race. There is inevitably a kind of indulgence in the Western treatment of Japanese character, a confession of the grotesque, mingled with the respect due to Japanese delicacy and fastidiousness. An Englishman in Japan must have an uneasy consciousness of the decorations he has left behind him — of the vulgarisms of the European world, of its wholesale trimming and its shouldering manners; and yet he must needs feel that Greece and Rome are in the ancestry of this dull and rough world, and are absent from the ancestry of that gentle and exquisite world of the extreme East, and that Japanese gentleness, humbleness, instinct, and art are to us alien from the beginning.



Japan

To a stranger there is an absence of expression, an inscrutability about the face of a Japanese. Ignorance of the language can be but little in comparison with ignorance of the eyes, and the eyes of the Japanese keep secret even the suggestion that there is anything to hide. They make denials of all mystery. The whole broad face utters a foreign language, but so habitually do we look for communication from the eyes that Japanese eyes seem to us to refuse all utterance whatever. But, after all, it must be to the works of the Japanese man — his art, his illumination, his garden, his selection, the fewness and the charm of his adornments of labour and life, his delicate buildings, his planted flowers — to these and not to his own mo-

notonous little form and his unclassical presence that we must look.

A gentle rosy lantern, a luminous white iris, and a purple and twilight moon, — such things make the touching beauty of this ultimate East, where the temperate climate is unsmirched, the earth sweetly cultivated, the mountain-forms strange, and the sky that of the ocean-side of the globe.

MEXICO

MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

MEXICO

I JOURNEYED to Mexico in an Indian Pacific cargo boat, which landed me at Tampico in the Gulf of Mexico, whence I began the usual beaten tourist track round Guadalquava, Puebla, the capital, and so on. The traveller who goes to the city of Mexico expecting to find local colour will be disappointed. Capitals of all countries have cosmopolitan points in common, and one must go further afield to get at the real traits and manners that are the inner characteristics of a nation. I might have been going round that circular tour still if a good man called Clegg, manager of the Inter-Oceanic Railway, had not put me up to the peculiar virtues of Tehuantepec as a place to stop at. The actual travelling to Tehuantepec was rather curious. The line was a new one, badly laid, and stoppages had occasionally to be made in order to cut wood for the engine. Whenever we came to a bridge

a man had to walk over first to see that it was safe. Then the train walked over; and then I walked over, for I judged it might be safer if the train and I did not walk over together. Tehuantepec is the centre of the Zapateco race, and I should not like to say how

old that race is. They were never conquered even by the Aztecs, but used to flee up to a stronghold called Gine-ugula, on the top of a mountain, whence nothing but a machine gun could fetch them. I paid a visit to Gine-ugula. We ate parrots on the way, and got the most magnificent views it is possible to imagine, right away to the coast of the Pacific. But it was a tremendous climb.

I had a servant called Antonio, the most useless of servitors, but paintable at every moment of his exist-

ence from the picturesque point of view. Antonio was most interested in my work, even to the extent of choosing subjects for my pictures. He hailed from the lowlands, and on that memorable journey to Gineugula up the mountains made sufficient ludicrous mis-

takes to fill a stout volume. Full of energy to start with, he collected together all the bedding and baggage belonging to myself and other travellers, and so surrounded himself with packages as to be indistinguishable at twenty paces; but within half an hour he cheerfully dropped the impeding bags or rugs along the road, and turned up practically luggageless, while search parties had to set out in all directions to pick up what he had dropped. After resting for an hour he began to collect wood for my camp fire. He

started on a sapling, which immediately gave way and landed him in the embrace of a peculiarly prickly form of cactus called the "Devil's Needle." That night he distinguished himself again by fixing my hammock to an outhouse only slightly built and used as a chicken roost; consequently, directly I got in, the whole concern came down with a crash and damaged six chickens. Quite unabashed, Antonio fixed me up again and went off to mind the camp fire, which presently, forgetful of my presence overhead, he nursed up nearer and nearer, until at last the flames crackled briskly directly beneath my hammock. My pain and fear were mingled in one mighty howl, as I leapt out with all the agility of a practised athlete. Antonio expressed genuine sorrow at my discomfiture, and proceeded to unsling my hammock from the friendly trees,

one of which he discovered, to his horror, was literally composed of myriads of nests of ants. The poor blunderer was frightfully bitten. I have painted Antonio in all attitudes and disguises, for though he would n't work, he served admirably for a model. It meant sitting still and doing nothing, which well suited the lazy beggar, who was really quite the "comic relief" of my time at Tehuantepec.

What a country and what a people! Despite all my efforts, my pictures were pale in comparison with the rich splendour of the land and the gorgeous beauty of the race. The women are marvellously beautiful, with a classical grace of carriage and firmness of figure that come through the habit — centuries old — of carry-

ing weights on the head. To me they suggested ancient Egyptians. In every way they are superior to the men; all the marketing and trading are left in their hands, while the men devote themselves to tilling the ground and drinking "mezcal." They have a

picturesque sense of colour in clothes; and one of the most interesting sights to be seen is the dyeing of the natural material by the seashore. They use the secretions of a kind of murex, the real old Tyrian dye. It is no unusual thing on a fine sunny morning to see hundreds of these beautiful women sitting on rocks by the sea, squeezing dye from shellfish on to snowy skeins of cotton. Instead of killing the shellfish, they

are careful to put them back again into the sea. Cotton dyed in this primitive fashion, by the time it is woven and shaped into skirts and shawls, suggests to one the varied tints of an opal. Think of a market place in Tehuantepec filled with two thousand or more of these, the most beautiful women in the world, with their superb carriage and the dignity of duchesses, with their exquisite figures swinging hither and thither in the sunshine, and all dressed in Tyrian-dyed skirts and chemisettes, for all the world suggestive of a great potpourri of rose petals and violets thrown upon silver sand — the sand of the Mexican desert. And not a man is admitted to spoil the harmony, save perhaps an artist like myself. That is one of the few scenes which will remain with me as long as I live. It was my first picture in Tehuantepec. I will refrain from describing these Zapateco beauties more minutely, as to do so always creates a disturbance. My audience, more especially if of old gentlemen, invariably set off in search of

atlases that they may find out the exact whereabouts of Tehuantepec, and eventually make a bee line for the place.

When I arrived at the hotel there, I found myself among a lot of amazing roughs. Railroad men, Americans, the scum of the earth, refugees from Panama, who had made even that ill-reputed locality too hot to hold them, dare-devils of every description, murderers, — in brief, a gang of utterly hopeless scoundrels. They regarded me in the light of a mere wandering artist who could do naught else but paint; and as they were full of mezcal — a spirit far stronger than brandy — it may be imagined they were not the most reliable companions in a lonely place. Each man carried a machete at his belt, and the ease with which they whipped these weapons out was alarming. The machete has a blade two feet and upwards in length, and is the last article of clothing that a Mexican would discard. They started by "ragging me" rather,

TEHUANTEPEC, MEXICO.

and "hustling" me about. My only way of winning them over was to beat them at their own game. I have shot at Bisley, Wimbledon, and the most famous ranges in the three kingdoms ; and so seizing a revolver, I gave them an exhibition of what I could do. They were won at once, and a very awkward moment was turned into a veritable hour of triumph. They respected me accordingly, and became my staunch friends. One man offered, as we sat in the hall, to tell me the histories of the various men as they entered. There was a San Salvador colonel, a most satanic-looking gentleman with black mustachios and billy-goat beard, who was endeavouring to recruit filibusters to reinstate the exiled ex-president Ezeta. Then there was a charming character with a pock-marked face and ferocious red beard. He was a pirate and an opium smuggler, a desperate man who confessed to having killed people by scores. I noticed a washed-out, middle-aged man, perfectly dressed, but

with a shifty expression that would have caused a Scotland Yard detective to turn three somersaults backward and exclaim, "By heaven! I am on his track." His nose was like the prow of an old war vessel; behind this one could see two slatey eyes and a weak, vacillating mouth, closely resembling that of a water rat. His left ear was missing, having been chewed off in a public bar-room in Puebla by an infuriated railway conductor, who would probably have masticated his whole carcass had he not been unwilling to deprive the gallows of a lawful victim, and had therefore allowed him to depart, slightly disfigured, but still in the ring. At the time I saw him he was employed to pull a bell in a neighbouring church. I was advised, if he came near my room, to nail everything down to the floor. There was also a British

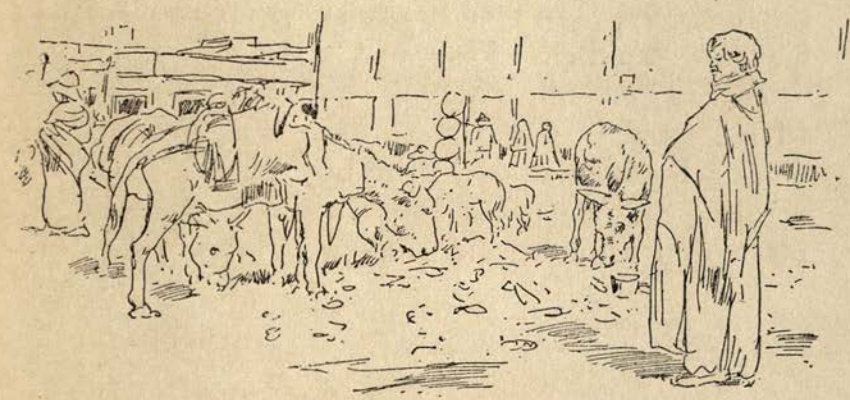
trooper of the Irish Lancers, harmless and amusing, chiefly noted as being a gentleman oppressed by doing nothing. One very gentlemanly-looking Mexican, with a kind, good-natured countenance, was pointed out to me as being the cause of between four hundred and five hundred deaths. Such were the men who were to be my companions for the next three months or so. Of course they were not all so bad as these, and the fine-haired villains kept themselves apart from the common herd; but still, I have met some curious characters in my time. Some of them were very amusing fellows indeed, and I would sit by the hour listening to their stories, told in that quaint American lingo which at first is almost unintelligible to a Britisher.

The first evening in Tehuantepec, my new friends proposed to take me to a cantina or a "mezcal joint," where, they said, I should see some pictures of Mexican home life. Nothing loath, I followed them, escorted by a half-crazy policeman as bodyguard. He was a plucky little chap, perfectly thorough in all he undertook. Eleven years ago he was the only man who volunteered to bury the corpses during the great cholera epidemic of 1883. Once, during an

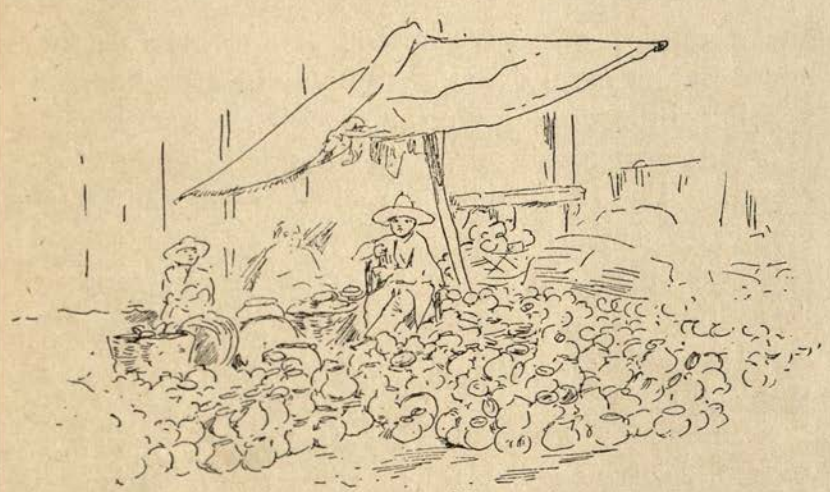
excursion to the cemetery, one of his passengers had the impertinence to sit up, and actually attempted to get out. The policeman indignantly knocked him over the head with his spade; but when they arrived at the cemetery, the rebellious corpse absolutely refused to be buried and the little fellow lost his temper, and,

squaring his fists, went for him. If it had not been for the timely interference of a passer-by, he would have carried the day.

Accompanied by this energetic man, we arrived at our cantina, a little gaudily painted shop, with a great gold ball hanging from the door, and a sign written in four different languages over it, adorned with pictures of tropical scenery painted by a native artist with a careless disregard of perspective. The shop was filled with half-drunken people, and lighted by a smoking



lamp and two dripping candles. The walls and ceiling were decorated with dried Spanish moss and festoons of coloured paper, with depending glass balls. Behind the counter were a number of gaily painted barrels, containing the various liqueurs. In the centre of the room was a large, rickety table, around which



the lowest types of men imaginable were seated, drinking and smoking. They had eight different bottles — cognac, mezcal, pulque, chartreuse, and so on. Men dressed in cheap straw hats, loose breeches, and sandals lounged about, drinking, playing dominoes, or grouped themselves about a blind man who was playing on a guitar and singing. These songs were

fine examples of native melody, more or less in a minor key, a nasal drawl at the end of each line, with a rising inflection, giving a peculiarly weird effect. Women gorgeously dressed mingled amongst the crowd. The atmosphere reeked with smoke and odours of stale liqueurs. It was by no means an enjoyable place in which to spend an evening, but interesting and unusual in the extreme. All kinds and types of faces and costumes were crowded in the stuffy little room. There were miners dressed in their Sunday clothes, in wide sombreros, full blouses over wide trousers, bright sashes wound round the

waist, and shod in sandals or yellow high-heeled boots; farmers in pleated smocks, loosely tied buck-skin trousers, made wide and open down the sides, with many buttons; artisans in black felt hats, turned-down collars and white shirts, low-necked waistcoats, coloured ties, short jackets cut in the Eton

shape, tight trousers, and high-heeled boots. Heavy swells swaggered about in clothes ornamented with silver buttons, and carried silver-handled pistols, and chains. Carriers and muleteers were to be seen in hats of palm leaves, with white duck trousers tucked into high yellow leather boots, and a kind of leathern armour over all; they had long whips coiled round the waist, with the handles hanging down, and belts full of pistols, knives, and cartridges. They were all strong, brawny-looking men, these Mexicans, very square-shouldered, with fine limbs, faces burnt to a copper

brown, bushy eyebrows, piercing black eyes, good teeth, aquiline noses, and oval faces.

The fact of our not being clothed in regulation white suits caused us to be looked upon with suspicion, which dangerous sentiment we hastened to allay by purchasing a bottle of mezcal and presenting it to the company. As the evening wore on the crowd became more and more noisy, and it was evident to us, the only two sober men in the cantina, that a row was breeding. Suddenly there was a scuffle and flash of steel. The blind musician dropped his guitar, and all pretences with it, and fled over the counter. The proprietor rushed into the night howling for the police, while women joined in the tumult with screams and yells. The crowd made precipitous darts for the various doors, only to be met by the police with rifles, who promptly placed the entire mob under arrest. The wounds of one of the fighters were pronounced to be not fatal, and he

A MEXICAN VILLAGE

was prodded to his feet, and placed in a line with the other prisoners, and the procession wound slowly into the dim night, leaving the weeping women behind. The proprietor returned and calmly threw down a shovelful of earth over the scene of the disturbance, made us a low bow, and hoped we had not been disturbed. I could relate some horribly brutal things, seen and heard of in Mexico, sufficient to turn your blood cold; but perhaps they are not much to the point. After all, it was from an artistic, not an ethnological point of view that I was chiefly interested in the country.

Sunday is the day to paint markets and street scenes in Tehuantepec. The trees in the public square bloom with oranges and mangoes. Clustered round and about the church are scores of dark-skinned market women, sitting

around on palm mats, stout, good humoured dames with gaily plaited black hair, low chemises, necklaces of gaudy beads, huge crescent-shaped earrings, and shawls of native manufacture wound round their heads. A piece of canvas held by a bamboo frame

shields both the woman and her wares — oranges, bananas, and tropical fruit and vegetables of all kinds — from the rays of the sun. Señoras, dressed in excessively starched print dresses, clean and white, reaching to the ankles so as to show two high-heeled, pointed-toed boots and white stockings, move amongst the crowd, market basket on one arm, prayer-book and rosary on the other. Two long plaits of black hair, tied at the ends with coloured ribbon, hang down to the waist. A servant walks behind, dressed in a white shirt, tucked into broad pyjama trousers; round his waist is the usual scarf, and a palm leaf hat is on his head. He is generally a good-

humoured, grinning lad. A round-faced, kindly priest moves among the crowd, talking to the vendors, and collecting from their hands many an offering of fruit and vegetables. He is dressed in a shiny top

hat, long black coat and trousers, and carries a large green umbrella.

At twelve o'clock one goes in search of a twelve-cent dinner at some cheap open-air shop. Such an one is not difficult to find, and one sits down at almost the first deal table one comes across. A stout, good-humoured old lady, adorned with glass bead jewelry, generally attends one, assisted by her daughter, often

a nice-looking girl, who has clear olive skin, bright eyes, good teeth, a large mouth, and is very vivacious. She brings you an earthenware brazier filled with charcoal. On this is a huge ollar, or pot of earthenware, containing the national dish of mole, — a sort of curry, generally turkey, — which is retailed in small earthenware dishes at six cents a portion. Besides this, there is a large pile of tortillas, or maize cakes, and a pot of pulque made from the fermented juice of the aloe; all for twelve cents.

In the evening, I invariably made my way back again to the market place. I might have been said to have indeed haunted that quaint old market place in Tehuantepec at one period of my visit. Those marvellous dresses worn by the native women, as they squatted about amongst heaps of gorgeously hued fruit and vegetables, made a scheme of colour which was no less fascinating to me in the evening by the flickering light of an occasional lamp or candle than it was in the glory of midday and mellow sunshine; in the groups of olive-complexioned natives in the varied employment of their city life, strongest orange reds, and apple greens, and lurid yellows, lit everywhere by an intense light as from a furnace, by which the colours of petticoat and cloak and tawny flesh are again and

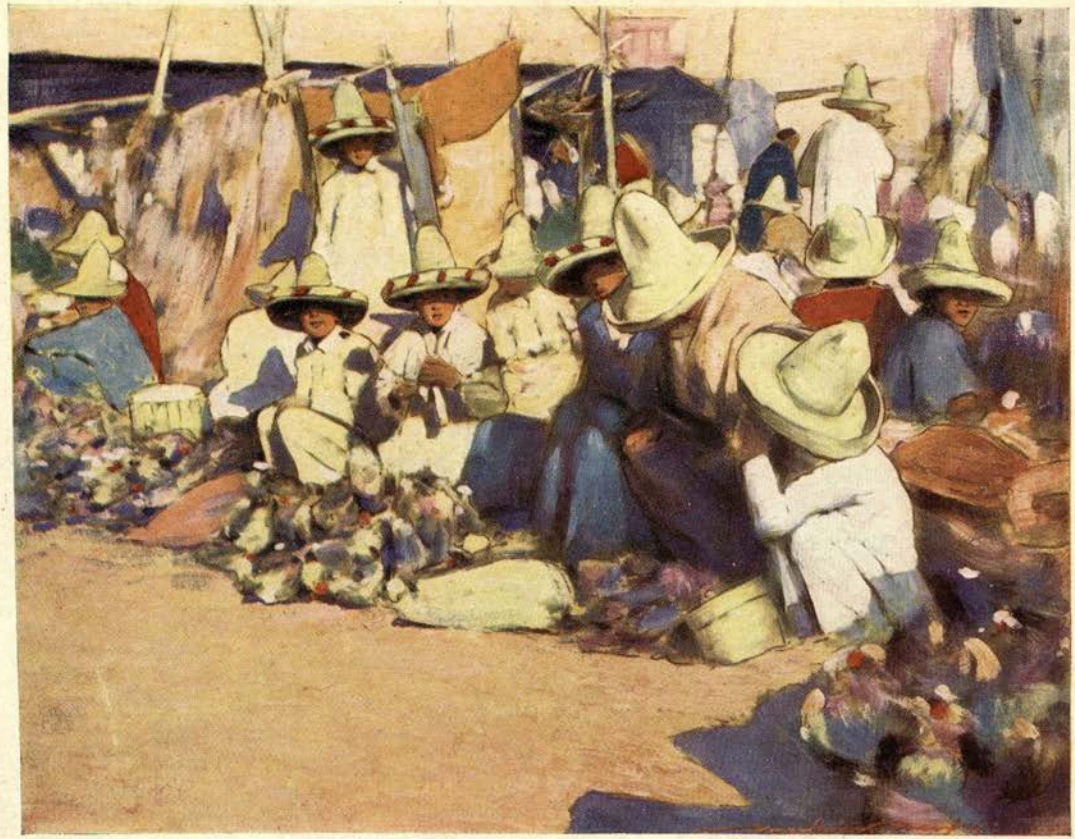
again reinforced and blended into a strange harmony. Still, the effect is undeniably striking, and the luminous gloom of the backgrounds reminds one continually of Rembrandt, although the soft, brown, golden atmosphere of the great Dutchman is here replaced by a lurid furnace glow.

I stayed in Mexico about six months — long enough to observe many national customs. The house of the Mexican peasant compares favourably in some ways with our dwellings for the poor. It consists of four forked uprights, supporting longitudinal beams, which form a foundation for the roof of palm leaves. The walls are made of cane piles, driven into the ground as close together as possible. To these are applied three or four inches of mud inside and outside, which, when dry, is decorated with a coat of whitewash. These "adobe" domiciles are built in a day. Any one in Tehuantepec, provided he belongs to a parish, has a right to erect a house anywhere within its boundaries. After having collected sufficient materials for the purpose, he invites his friends to come and help him to build. They are regaled with mezcal and "tomales" during the process, and by the united efforts of the party the house is completed before sundown.

The main fact of social life seems to be the importance of being a godfather. Parental influence is all

very well but the vicarious power of the sponsor is so great that nothing can be done without his consent. If you ask a father to allow you to marry his daughter, he in his turn is obliged to obtain the consent of the godfather or godmother. There are also financial responsibilities, but the post is one of great honour, and gladly accepted by every one. All ceremonies are an excuse for promiscuous drinking. The popular bever-

age, mezcal, is a concoction of the Mexican aloe. But the strongest beverage in the country is called "catalan," which must not be confounded with the catalan of Spain. This spirit is prepared from sugar cane, and is distilled and redistilled until it is almost pure alcohol —seventy-five per cent at least. There is also a milder form of spirit which is known as "aguardiente." Mezcal has a curiously sedative effect: everything becomes *couleur de rose*, and if you were to see a man murdered while under its influence, you would look on with an amused and tolerant smile. Births and marriages



PUEBLA, MEXICO

are occasions for long debauches. On November 1 of each year, the Mexicans and Indians lay out spirits upon a table, and open the doors and windows in case the dead should be disposed to quench their thirst. Needless to say, the dead refrain, whereupon the relatives assemble on the following night, and have a glorious time.

The greatest entertainment is the annual fair, called "Vela," which lasts for several days. It consists of fireworks, processions, — formerly interspersed with Pagan ceremonies, but now concluded by the Mass, — and dancing, which is a strange medley of native dances and European measures. The women dance, as they do everything else, with a wonderful unstudied grace and dignity. There is a procession called the "Convilo de Flores" which is very beautiful. Hundreds of ox-carts are adorned with sugar cane and whole plants of bananas, and the oxen decorated with flowers. The most important men of every parish follow, each carrying a large wax candle, decorated with ribbons and flowers, and weighing generally from twenty to twenty-five pounds. Then come the musicians, as many bands massed together as the parish can afford, followed by beautiful girls of the poorer class, dressed in the native costume, generally red or indigo blue. Towards the end of the procession come the daughters of the richer families, dressed in heavily starched cotton skirts over three or four starched petticoats, which produce the effect of crinolines. All the girls carry painted gourds filled with rose petals, which, when they meet, they throw at one another. Boys and men let off rockets

at street corners and generally make as much noise as possible. Then the flowers are deposited on the floor of the church. The next evening there is a grand ball, to which every one but drunken men are admitted. Any woman or man invited is compelled to dance. The ball lasts until daybreak. The revels are kept up all the next day, after which for a week every one in Tehuantepec, man, woman, and child, is more or less laid up.

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